

Summer of Twenty

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Summer of Twenty

by [seryters](#)

Summary

"I've never kissed anybody," George confesses.

Dream doesn't understand how that's possible. Like this, basked in the comfort of the moonlight, George is beautiful.

"Really? Who wouldn't want to kiss you?" There's too much honesty in Dream's voice. It's raw—a confession practically begging to be brought to light.

"Dream," George is careful, as if his next words could lead to Dream's downfall.

And they do.

"Can you teach me how to kiss?"

For Tomorrow

Chapter Notes

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

For now, I hope you enjoy reading my first chaptered fic (ever) featuring two oblivious idiots and the cliché "practice kissing" prompt.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream is *so* close to falling asleep when a notification comes through and sets off an obnoxiously loud ping from his phone. With a frustrated grunt, he reaches out blindly, feeling around on his bedside desk until he finds the device.

There's only three contacts Dream allows to override the "do not disturb" mechanism on his phone: his mom, his sister, and—

"George," Dream groans when he sees the '*U up?*' on his lock screen. The temptation to ignore the text and return to slumber is strong, but Dream knows George wouldn't be texting him for absolutely no reason. Not at ungodly hours in the night at least.

'depends..'

Dream sits up a little, perching his head on his hand as he waits for a reply. The moonlight pierces through his sheer curtains, providing him some comfort.

'On?'

A small smirk tugs onto Dream's face as he types out his reply.

'what are you gonna give me in return?'

Dream can't help but chuckle as George's text bubble appears and disappears. He knows that George is trying to come up with a witty reply, but since it's late for both of them, it's going to take

a little longer.

He rubs his fists at the corner of his eyes and then pushes himself up into a comfortable sitting position, trying to get rid of his drowsiness. A shiver runs down his back as his blanket slips down and bunches up by his waist, leaving his torso exposed to the draft seeping in from his open window.

‘Are you a fan of crafting tables?’

Dream barks out a laugh at that, tossing his head back and then wincing when he bangs it against the wall. His left hand shoots up to cradle his head, the pads of his finger soothing the wounded area. Down the hallway, the light in Sapnap’s room turns on and Dream waves awkwardly when his friend peeks his head out to squint at him.

“You okay, man? What happened?” Sapnap’s words slur together, clear evidence that he’s still half asleep. It’s not out of character for Sapnap to be so caring, which is exactly why Dream can’t fight off the fond smile on his face as he gives him a thumbs up.

“I’m good! Hit myself by accident.”

“Idiot,” Sapnap mutters after an amused scoff. He lingers for a second longer though, waiting for Dream to explain further, and while Dream is thankful for his friend’s concern, he’s a bit—

‘What? Did I leave you speechless?’ —busy.

Dream rolls his eyes at his phone, forgetting about his current situation for a brief second, but Sapnap’s voice reels him back. “Who’s that?”

Tossing his phone over his shoulder, Dream waves his hand dismissively and lets out a nervous laugh. “Nobody! Uh- don’t you have to catch up on your beauty rest?” Luckily for him, Sapnap’s ego is too big *not* to fall for the bait.

“Damn right,” Sapnap replies and with one last, scrutinizing look, he disappears into his room.

Behind him, Dream's phone vibrates and slides off his pillow, landing right by his hip. He glances down at it curiously and to no surprise, George's name greets him.

'Sapnap just told me you woke him up. Did I affect you that much?'

Dream can't help but snort at that. Once the gears in George's head start turning, there's no stopping him. Befriending a smartass might not have been Dream's best choice.

'maybe you did. maybe i really like crafting tables.' But then again, Dream's a smartass himself. *'or maybe i just really like you.'*

It's always like this: a constant back and forth, one biting and the other biting harder. Sometimes it's bickering, seeing who can get under whose skin quicker, and sometimes it's *this*, teasing in the form of subtle flirting.

Flirting? Is that the right word for it? Flirting would imply something romantic, wouldn't it? They weren't being romantic.

Dream's clock ticks on, far too loud for him to not notice each second that passes by while he waits for a reply. He brushes his thumb over his screen, refreshing the app in the off-chance that a message hadn't gone through quite right, but there's nothing. It's been nearly five minutes since George has seen his texts and normally that wouldn't be too long, but George hasn't even entertained him with a typing bubble.

He didn't push too far, did he?

Upon rereading his texts for the umpteenth time, Dream still fails to find the line he might've crossed. George had started with the innuendos and Dream had simply played a long like always. Other than that, all Dream had said was that he *liked* him. That wasn't.. bad, was it?

Dream scratches the back of his head, eyebrows pinching together. He told George he loved him all the time, how was this any different? If George told *him* he liked him, he wouldn't find it weird. They were friends and friends were *supposed* to like each other.

A soft buzz breaks Dream's train of thoughts and Dream looks around for a moment before realizing that the noises are coming from his phone.

George is calling him.

“Or maybe I just really like you.”

Dream’s breath catches in his throat when George’s voice drips like honey through the speakers. There’s a groggy edge to his tone and Dream assumes he’s in bed, just like him, which makes everything feel so much more.. real.

He was wrong. He was *so* wrong. Saying ‘like’ instead of ‘love’ felt very, *very* different.

“Are you serious? What’s wrong with you, Dream?” George hisses and Dream tries to play it off with a laugh. His right hand clenches itself into a fist, wrinkles forming in the duvet from the strength of his grip. “You’re so annoying.”

“Well, you set yourself up for it,” Dream says, leaning against the headboard of his bed and staring idly at the ceiling. “What did you text me for anyway?”

There’s a moment of silence following his question, but Dream doesn’t press on. If George was only looking for a distraction from whatever happened, then that’s what Dream would give him.

George trusts him—trusts him enough to show his vulnerable sides to him, like right now, and that means George will open up to him when he’s ready; he always does.

“Just wanted to talk,” George exhales quietly and Dream can almost feel the breath creeping down his neck. His eyes fall shut and he shudders. “Couldn’t sleep.” Dream can almost hear the pout on George’s lips with the way he softly mumbles under his breath.

“Aw,” he finds himself cooing. “I would say ‘same’ but I was doing just fine until..” He trails off, hearing George stumble over his words and ultimately stutter into an apology.

“O-Oh, sorry. I didn’t know. We can stop talking if—”

“No!” Dream’s interruption startles George into a gasp and the volume at which he shouts is a surprise to himself as well. He half expects Sapnap’s light to turn on again, but it doesn’t. “I mean— if I don’t distract you, I don’t get my prize, right?”

“Are you that interested in a crafting table?” George’s laugh sounds melodic and Dream finds himself unable to withhold a chuckle. The cold air doesn’t bother him as much anymore.

“I wouldn’t say it’s the crafting table I’m interested in.”

“Shut up, Dream,” George huffs and then he emits a soft whine that catches Dream off guard. Normally, he’s used to George’s tiny temper tantrums, so much so that he’s learned how to ‘deal’ with them. It’s why Sapnap always begs for him to ‘tame’ George when George is being a—for a lack of better words—brat.

However, hearing his name fall from George’s lips like *that* in the middle of the night definitely does things to Dream. Things it should *not* be doing.

“Is it okay if we go to sleep like this?” George asks a beat later, this time much quieter and almost shy. Dream feels a twist in his heart, strings all tangled in sizable knots. It’s a much different feeling from the one he harbored mere seconds ago, but somehow it’s even more dangerous.

“Sure.” Slipping back down until his head hits the pillows, Dream tucks himself under his covers again and then sets his phone a few inches from his face. “Goodnight, George.”

“Sweet dreams,” George mumbles tiredly and Dream hears him shuffle around in bed before it grows quiet.

“As long as you’re in them again, they will be,” Dream whispers. George groans at that and Dream giggles, letting his eyelids flutter shut.

It’s safe to say that after lulling himself to sleep with the sound of George’s steady breathing, his dreams are definitely sweet.

When Dream wakes up, it's not because of Sapnap's whistle tone screaming nor is it because of Patches pawing at his cheek. Instead, it's because of the soft noises coming from his phone.

The eerie sounds cause Dream a hefty amount of confusion at first. He can barely grasp a sense of his surroundings let alone comprehend what's happening. "Patches," he scolds lightly, reaching his hands up to move his cat away from his face.

"Stop.. "

Dream's eyes dart to his phone. It's still too early for George to be awake, considering how he regularly sleeps half the day away, so Dream feels guilt in the pit of his stomach. He must've accidentally woken him up.

"No, please, anything but that.. "

Patches hooks her claws into Dream's shirt in an attempt to regain his attention, but Dream's gaze doesn't leave his phone. George is talking in his sleep again. This isn't the first time it's happened. George has accidentally fallen asleep on call plenty of times in the past and Dream has heard many, many things come out of an unconscious George.

But they've never sounded like this.

"My blue ."

George's sleep talking usually made no sense and had to do with food and minecraft more often than not. He was also louder and more monotonous, not soft spoken and frail like he is now.

"Don't take it away.. "

"George?" Dream's heart skips more beats than he would like to admit, but he can't help the worry that's beginning to eat away at him from the inside. George doesn't reply, still heavy in slumber, and when he lets out another pained whimper, Dream raises his voice. "George!"

There's a soft gasp and frantic shuffling, meaning Dream has successfully woken George up. The blanket makes an unflattering noise as it rubs against the sheets and Dream winces when a loud thud sounds, probably meaning George's phone had fallen.

"Fuck!" He hears George say and then there's some more rustling before George speaks again. This time he's close enough to his phone's mic for Dream to hear him clearly. "H-Hey?"

"Morning, sleeping beauty," Dream teases while draping an arm over his eyes to block the intensity of the sun. He knows better than to ask about the nightmare, regardless of how curious he is, so he doesn't say anything else.

"You're an asshole for waking me up," George mumbles, seemingly unaware of what had happened a few minutes prior. Although Dream wants to defend himself, he doesn't want to cause any unwanted memories to resurface, so he opts for something else instead.

"Oh yeah? What're you gonna do about it?" He doesn't mean for it to come out suggestive. It's supposed to be harmless teasing, a means to change the topic, something George can work with to guide the conversation—but it comes out all wrong. His voice is dangerously low from having just woken up and the soft grunt of disapproval he gives Patches does nothing to help his case.

"I'm gonna expose you," George says after a pause. His words sound jumbled, a clear indication that he's flustered, and Dream finds himself pressing onwards without so much as a second thought.

"You want me exposed?" It takes George a while to get that one. There's a syllable of apparent confusion that escapes him before he realizes the subtle innuendo.

"You're gross," George cringes and there's a soft smack, which Dream guesses is from him facepalming himself. "Like actually."

"You love it," Dream retaliates, stretching his arms over his head. In the distance, Sapnap lets out another inhumane screech; Dream winces. Soundproof walls might definitely be something to consider in the near future.

"What the hell is he doing?" George snorts. Dream realizes then that he's too aware of the way George hadn't denied the statement he made earlier. There were easy explanations for that: George

didn't hear him, Sapnap distracted them, George didn't feel like answering or forgot to. Dream's mind sends him down the lone tunnel of *well perhaps he does love it*.

"Dream?"

As if on cue, Patches meows by the phone and George snickers at that. "Not the answer I was expecting, but I can't say I'm surprised."

Dream rolls his eyes at that, "Shut up." He ushers Patches off of the bed and watches as she taps out of his room and into Sapnap's, eliciting a delighted squeal from him.

"Are you streaming today?"

Dream finds himself snickering in response to George's question. "Stop laughing and answer me, dickhead."

The mattress sighs in relief when Dream stands up, freeing it from his weight. "What do *you* think, George?" The shirt he puts on is gray with a low v-cut, thin and open just enough for Dream to bear the heat.

"Whatever." George's accent is thicker when he has an attitude, Dream notes quietly. A string of peculiar noises emit from George's end of the call and Dream figures that George is getting out of bed as well. "Do you want to join me then? I'm gonna do an early stream today."

"What?" Dream wheezes in disbelief, glancing at the clock hanging above his PC setup. "You've got to be kidding me." It's only a quarter past noon, which might make this the earliest stream George has ever done, *if* he actually pulls through with it. Dream has his reasons to call George's bluff.

"You don't think I can do it?"

"I didn't say *that*," Dream replies, tightening the strings of his sweats so that the waistband hugs tighter where it rests, low on his hips. "It's just a little bit early, innit, Gogy?"

“That’s the point of an ‘early stream’, yes, *Clay*.” He can hear the smirk in George’s voice.

“What did you just call me?” There’s no actual malice, of course, but there’s still an unspoken rule of not saying Dream’s real name. Though when George does it, Dream doesn’t really find himself minding. It sounds rather nice falling from George’s lips, if Dream’s going to allow himself some honesty.

That’s all thanks to the accent, of course. Nothing more.

“Clay,” George repeats fearlessly.

Dream clicks his tongue against the roof of his mouth, “I wouldn’t get too bold if I were you, Georgie.”

“Oh no, I’m so scared.” George mocks him enthusiastically, ending off with a signature giggle. “Stop acting so tough, Dream. I could totally take you.” Now *that* is hilarious. Dream ends up laughing so much, he has to curl an arm around his stomach to ease the strain on his abdomen.

“Oh, yeah? Try it.” The odds of George winning a fight against Dream are slim; 1 in 7.5 trillion, if Dream wants to be quirky. There’s simply no way. George, who is glued to his bed and almost half a foot shorter than Dream, who’s been on a *football* team for crying out loud—did George really think he could win?

“I will as soon as I’m in the states. Prepare to lose, pissbaby.”

The window squeaks as Dream pushes it shut. “I bet 1000 dollars, George,” Dream begins, sifting through the dials of his air conditioner to pick a higher setting, “That I’ll win against you. One handed.” Maybe he’s a little too confident, but Dream’s seen George. Unless George has been going to the gym religiously since the last time they facetimed, there was no way he was stronger than Dream.

Even with the air conditioner at its max settings, the Florida heat begins to grow irritable and Dream decides that wearing sweats was a bad idea, no matter how soft and comfy the fabric is.

His shorts are sprawled over his chair. It would be easy just to grab them and change, so he decides on just that. His thumb swipes on his phone quickly, putting George on speaker, before undoing

the knot he made with the strings of his sweats.

“You’re gonna hold me down with only one hand?” Dream hums absentmindedly, hooking his thumbs past the elastic band. “What’re you gonna do to me with the other one then?”

Before Dream can reply, there’s an uncomfortable cough from behind him and Dream whips his head around to find Sapnap standing at his doorway. There’s an unreadable expression on his face, but his eyes travel from Dream’s face to the positioning of Dream’s hands and finally, the phone where George’s heavily misleading words are coming from.

Dream parts his lips to explain but Sapnap raises a hand, “I don’t even want to know.” A howl of laughter from George. “I microwaved hot pockets. Yours is on the kitchen table.” Then, he’s gone.

“George!”

“What? I was just asking for clarification.” Dream can hear just how smug George feels and wants nothing more than to take all of that away from him.

“Well, if you really want to know. I’d use it to shut you up,” and then, breathier and barely audible, “I’ll leave the rest to your imagination.”

“I’m not imagining it,” George hisses, but Dream can tell he’s flustered. His cheeks are probably red, a sharp contrast to his pale complexion, and Dream can’t stop himself from wondering if he colors that easily elsewhere too. How much strength would Dream need to apply to leave blossoming hues on George’s body? Probably not too much, George is small compared to him.

Hands. *His* hands. On George’s face, over his mouth—fingers slipping inside—Dream’s the one wrapped in dangerous, dangerous thoughts.

“Maybe you should,” Dream mutters, too dazed by his own fantasies which have delved way past friendly borders. “Maybe then you’ll stop being such a brat.”

Instead of another scoff, Dream is met with a dial tone. George had hung up on him.

It's only then that the severity of his thoughts (of his *words*) finally begin catching up to Dream. This conversation had been different from the ones they'd shared in the past; Dream had *meant it* this time.

His phone lights up with a ding.

Prick.

Dream holds his breath, watching the text bubble intently. He'd gone too far this time. George is mad; he has to be.

You didn't win, if that's what you're thinking.

Confusion replaces fear. Dream leans closer to the screen, as if George will reply any faster.

I moved to discord. I'm setting up the stream. Hurry up and join.

Dream sighs in relief, eyeing the black screen of his monitor. He reaches out, tapping the power button with his index finger, and then resumes tugging off his sweats. Warmth licks at the nape of Dream's neck as he grabs his shorts and carefully slips them on.

i'll be there in 5 min, getting food real quick.

George reacts to his message with a thumbs up and Dream heads down to the kitchen where, as Sapnap had promised, a hot pocket waits for him on a paper plate. Sapnap's a fan of disposable utensils. They're easy to get rid of and save them the hassle of having to do dishes. Dream can't argue against that.

"Dude."

Dream nearly drops the snack when Sapnap's voice disrupts the otherwise silent quarters. "Fuck you," he laughs, shaking his head when Sapnap comes into his sight with a boyish grin drawing onto his lips. "What?" He asks, taking a bite out of the hot pocket after. It's no longer in a state where it can burn his taste buds off so Dream emits a pleased sound to thank Sapnap.

“Is George finally flying over?” Sapnap asks, eyes round and expectant, like a kid at a toy store. Dream nearly chokes on his meal, taken aback by how random Sapnap’s question is.

“*What?* ”

“I said is George finally flying over?” Sapnap repeats without hesitation, drumming his knuckles against the granite countertop. “I heard you guys talking about.. whatever weird plans you had.. and that’s only possible if he flies over? Right? So he’s flying over!”

Sometimes, Sapnap’s enthusiasm is cute. Other times, it’s hard to keep up with. This is one of those times.

“I don’t think that’s...” And then he remembers George’s words. *As soon as I’m in the states.* There was no *if*, it was definite. There was no date either, but it was something, right? It meant George was planning to visit. It might not be soon, but it would happen eventually.

“Fuck, wait.”

The speed at which Dream races back to his room is fast enough to hold him a record. He’s frantic to open discord and when he finally pulls up their server—the dream team’s server—George is waiting for him.

“*George.* ” He’s exasperated, huffing so hard it almost seems as if he’s never worked out a day in his life.

“*Dream.* Why are you saying my name like that again?”

“‘As soon as I’m in the states?’ As in-”

George cuts him off with a laugh, but Dream doesn’t understand what’s so funny.

“Took you long enough.”

“George,” Dream is beyond perplexed and words are not his forte when that’s the case. “George, you can’t just *say* that and not- I don’t know- explain!”

“Well, if you *must* know,” George begins and from the corner of Dream’s eye, he can see Sapnap’s icon jump to the ‘Online’ category. A second later, there’s a joining noise. “... Well, if you *both* must know,” George repeats after Sapnap greets them. “Karl’s flying me out for the ‘feraltwt meetup’ you guys planned.”

“What?” Sapnap says on behalf of both him and Dream.

Dream is much, much louder. “*What?!* ”

They’ve been planning this for a while now, him and Karl, but George was never mentioned. They’d asked him once in the beginning, but George had said that it was too much work and Dream had never pressed on.

It seems that Karl had.

“But you said the first time..” Dream is dumbfounded. He’s sure that Sapnap and George can hear his loud clicks as he pulls up his private messages with Karl and then the groupchat they’d made for the meet up, but he doesn’t care. He has to get to the bottom of this. George has to be pulling a prank on them.

“Yeah, but Karl wouldn’t leave me alone and—believe it or not—he’s actually quite persuasive.”

“How much money?”

“Sapnap, do you think I’m that easy-”

“Two grand? Three?”

“Five actually.” George is unbelievable, Dream thinks. “And a shoutout on TikTok.” But that’s

what Dream likes about him.

“The meetup is the day after Quackity’s flight though. That’s in three days.” George can probably hear the heavy suspicion poisoning Dream's words, but he answers him unhindered.

“Which is why I’m doing a stream today, genius. Then I have lots of time to pack.” His tone is matter-of-fact, making it sound all the more genuine, so Dream gives in and allows himself to hope. He stops scrolling through his messages and relaxes his posture, smiling stupidly at his screen while George’s mic lights up.

“I’ll be in North Carolina a few hours before you two,” George elaborates. Dream frowns at that. “Karl said he and Quackity are going to pick me up.”

“What?” Dream interjects.

That would mean Karl and Quackity would be the first people to see George in America (and vise versa). That didn’t sit right with him.

“No, we’ll pick you up.”

“Did you completely miss the part where I said I’d be there before you guys?”

“So? We’ll just get up earlier.”

“We will?” Sapnap asks.

“We will,” Dream repeats firmly. “We’ll come get you, George.”

“It’s fine, Dream. It’s not like they’re strangers or anything-”

“I *said* we’ll come get you, George.”

Sapnap's hum sounds noncommittal, but Dream doesn't doubt that Sapnap is as excited to meet George. Convincing him to leave at 4am shouldn't be too hard given that fact (and also the offer to treat him to lunch on the way).

George is quiet, but a second later, Dream hears the swift noise of an iMessage being sent. "Okay," George pipes up. "I texted Karl. You guys better not be late."

The weight on Dream's shoulders falls off, rolling down his back smoothly and then being swept underneath his shadow. He feels less tense and loosens the fists he hadn't realized he'd curled his hands into. Jealousy, which he reluctantly credits for nipping away at his sanity, soon ebbs away into nothingness and he begins to focus on more important matters, such as:

Fuck, George is coming to America.

"We wouldn't *dream* of it, Georgie," Sapnap sneers, pun clearly intended. They rush back into shared laughter and Dream momentarily forgets the events that happened earlier in the day.

When his thoughts had gotten ahead of himself, when he'd pictured things past their norm, when he unintentionally blurred the line between friends and something more.

"I'm excited," Sapnap admits gleefully. "I can't wait to prove that I'm way taller than you by the way." Dream can't help but snort at his friend's childish priorities.

"Wanna bet on it?" George is quick to challenge.

"This addiction to gambling has to stop," Dream reprimands, pinching the bridge of his nose. George splutters in shock at that, bringing himself closer to his mic.

"Excuse me? *You* were the one that made our bet earlier. Not me."

Right. Their bet. The one they'd met before Dream had starting thinking of-

"Ew. Is this about the weird kinky shit you guys were talking about earlier?" Sometimes, Dream thinks, murder is okay. "I mean I knew you guys were freaky, but I didn't think you were *that*

freaky.”

And it’s in Sapnap’s best interest to sleep with one eye open while he’s under the same roof as Dream.

“Sapnap, lock your door.” The warning is clear. Dream mutes his mic the second he hears Sapnap’s confused ‘*what?*’ and directs himself to the open bedroom door down the corridor.

“Are you jealous? Poor little Sappy Nappy.” Dream hears George’s relentless teasing as he walks into Sapnap’s room. “Don’t worry, you can join us. We can share.” Sapnap was telling the truth that one stream, Dream concludes upon hearing those words leave George. The oldest of the three definitely did get a lot bolder when Dream wasn’t around.

“Something tells me Dream wouldn’t like that idea,” Sapnap says, turning his head over his shoulder and raising an eyebrow at the blonde man leaning against his door frame. “It might be because he *actually* walked into my room, but I don’t know, man.”

Dream doesn’t actually have any murderous intentions, of course, but Sapnap does deserve a harsh smack on the back of his head so Dream delivers just that.

“Ouch, sounded like it hurt,” George comments, sounding thoroughly amused instead of concerned. “Don’t worry, it can be our secret.” At first, Dream is confused as to why George is speaking as if he’s not standing right there, but then he realizes: George doesn’t know Sapnap’s headset isn’t turned on.

“Yeah, no thanks, I kinda like my life *not* being Dream’s punching bag.”

“Boo, you’re no fun.” A brat, Dream reaffirms.

“You’re just saying this because Dream’s too much of a simp to do anything to *you*. That means I take all the heat when he’s mad!”

Okay, that’s not true, Dream tells Sapnap with a half-hearted glare.

He's met with one equally as telling, *yes it is*.

“But he’s *hot* when he’s mad. Don’t you agree?”

That’s a joke. Dream *knows* it’s a joke. Sapnap’s laughing with his whole chest right now and Dream should be laughing with him, being the insufferable leo that he is, but he can’t.

“I don’t know,” Sapnap answers. “What do you think, Dream?”

George’s words are replaying in Dream’s head like a broken record, so Dream completely misses the chance to answer. By the time remembers what's happening, Sapnap is eyeing him strangely, which makes sense since the silence he’d gotten from Dream was anything *but* dismissive.

Thankfully, he’s saved from an awkward conversation by George’s embarrassed squeak. “He can *hear* me?!”

At the same time, George’s notification for going live pops up on both Dream’s and Sapnap’s phone. “Yeah,” Dream replies as Sapnap navigates to George’s twitch channel on the computer.

George is donning his own merch and his infamous white goggles are perched atop his head. “Oh? Glasses making a comeback?” Dream asks and he can see Sapnap steal a glance at him through his peripheral vision. If Sapnap sees the extra fond smile on Dream’s face, he says nothing of it.

“Just for a bit,” George replies and a few seconds later, Dream can see his lips move on the stream.

“Put them on!” Sapnap chimes in with the encouragement in George’s chat.

George shakes his head with a laugh, “No. It looks silly.” His fingers play with the sleeves of his hoodie, tugging on them until his hands disappear completely. It’s a habit Dream’s picked up on; it means George is getting nervous.

“I think you look cute in them,” Dream supplies to ease up George’s nerves and then he moves on. “Wait, is that *the* GeorgeNotFound merch available on the official GeorgeNotFound shop at GeorgeNotFound dot shop?”

It's a practiced routine. He knows George needs the reassurance, but he also knows not to dwindle on something that makes George uncomfortable.

George doesn't miss the beat to slip into talking about his merch, but Dream catches the quick glance he throws at the camera. Dream knows that's for him. A silent thanks. That's part of the routine too.

Patches crawls in between him and Sapnap, somehow finding a way onto the latter's lap and curling up comfortably. It's surprising how quickly Patches has grown accustomed to Sapnap, despite him being much louder than she prefers.

Sapnap hits the hotkey to mute his mic, running a hand through Patches' fur. His window is still open and a breeze slips in, rustling the curtains just enough for Dream to see the horizon. In a few days, he'll be sharing the sight with George. The idea scares him, but not in a bad way.

It scares him into feeling something, a lot of something. To finally have George within arm's reach, to be able to see him up close, to hear his voice so clearly, they all cause a lurch in Dream's chest.

But if he's going to be fair, there's still the aching fear of a repetition of today's events—of Dream tripping over his own feet and landing face first in uncharted territory.

“Dream, Sapnap, you guys ready?”

But that boulder is for him to push at on another day.

Chapter End Notes

We didn't jump right into the kissing because while that's all fun and good, I am an absolute WART about making sure I lead up to it properly. I don't want to overwhelm everyone at the start.

This chapter was also dialogue heavy and I apologize for that. It's much harder to describe things when they're.. overseas. ;__; It'll loosen up in the upcoming chapters and be more focused on feelings and thoughts!

Comments are welcome and appreciated! :D

A Sun That Burns

Chapter Summary

It's not just George's arrival that's making Dream nervous. It's not. It's not that simple.

Chapter Notes

Reminder that if Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“You’re dog water? You’re literally dog water!”

Dream tosses his head back, laughing as he watches Sapnap chase down George and miss his last hit by a hair’s breadth. He can hear Sapnap’s frustrated cry in real time and through his headset; it plays a third time when the stream catches up.

George’s lips are pressed into a thin line, trying to hide his grin, and Dream can’t help but smile back. He forgets that he’s supposed to be chasing George too, that is until Sapnap hits his character from the back. “Move, lover boy!”

Dream takes off almost instantaneously, teaming up with Sapnap to corner George by the blaze spawner. “Oh, George,” he sings almost maniacally as George’s username comes into sight.

“C’mere, George!” Sapnap cackles, racing past Dream in a bloodlust frenzy.

There’s no way out of this. Dream’s by the entrance and Sapnap’s closing in quickly, George doesn’t have the time to mine to safety. He’s done for.

“Stop moving!” Sapnap’s frustration grows with each attack of his that George evades.

Dream notices that George is much more agile than last time, but the circumstances make his

attempt at survival futile. George is bound to slip up and when he does, Sapnap's going to kill him.

"Dude, I have to sleep, just die already!" Sapnap's movements become much more agitated.

"Dream! Get him to stop!" George's avatar faces him and Dream catches the way George raises an eyebrow on stream, provoking him.

"Be good, Georgie" Dream teases. The chat moves at twice its regular speed, just as Dream had expected, and George shakes his head at the screen.

"Or what?" He challenges after snickering at Sapnap barely missing him again. "Are you gonna make me, Dream?"

The images return. This time, Dream can almost feel tender skin underneath his fingers as they hike higher and higher up on his mind's rendition of George's lithe frame. He's probably just as pale down here, his mind whispers as his fingers push past the hem of George's shorts.

"Dream, are you fucking *kidding* me?" Sapnap shouts into his mic and Dream snaps his head up, catching a glimpse of Sapnap's character breezing past him before it disappears off screen. He's standing idly in the same room they'd trapped George in a few seconds ago.

"Thanks, Dream!" George chirps happily and Dream finds himself staring as George tosses his arms in the air happily at the sound of Sapnap forfeiting. His sweater rides up just enough for Dream to catch the smallest glimmer of pale skin. The chat speeds off again, spamming requests for screenshots and clips. There's a sour taste lingering on the tip of Dream's tongue.

"I'm too tired, whatever." Sapnap yawns and disconnects from the server. "I can't believe Dream let you escape." Dream can tell that Sapnap had expected it though.

"He's a sim- *s word*," George corrects himself quickly. There's a lopsided grin on his face as he tries to convince his viewers that he technically didn't violate Twitch guidelines. Dream takes this moment to disconnect himself from the server as well.

"Hi, George! Your streams make me so happy—aw, thank you—and I was wondering if you would ever consider dating a stan," George reads the donation out loud. Dream doesn't notice the frown on his face until his laptop screen dims from inactivity, showing him his own reflection. "I guess," George answers truthfully. "As long as they're not super weird and have pictures of me all over their room. Like Dream." There's a bark of laughter from both George and Sapnap.

“*What?* ” Dream asks, clearly not expecting that answer. Despite his dramatic response, he quietly tabs out of George’s stream, eyes flickering away from the facecam, and opens twitter. It doesn’t help that George’s face is the first thing on his timeline. *Whatever*, he concedes to himself.

“I’m gonna nap,” Sapnap announces, bidding them both goodbyes before leaving the call, and Dream resumes scrolling through twitter aimlessly. He tunes George out as a flood of donations get read aloud, until there’s one that *demand*s his attention.

“Are you man enough to kiss the homies?” Dream opens up George’s channel again, needing to read the donation for himself. There’s a second part to the question, but George doesn’t read it aloud. It asks—

“Yeah, why wouldn’t I be,” George shrugs. “And yes, I would kiss Dream for a thousand dollars.” Dream’s nails dig into the cushioned seat of his chair. “I’d even do it for free.” A smirk appears on George’s face, his eyes meeting with the camera because he *knows* Dream is watching.

Dream’s mind screams at him to say something, anything. George is going to figure out what’s wrong if Dream doesn’t play along; it’s too clear this time.

“Well, that’s all for the stream today guys!” George announces, seeming unphased. His tongue rolls past his lips and Dream tries not to fixate on how red they’ve become from George’s consistent nipping. “Thank you all for coming!” And just like that, the channel goes offline.

Dream remains quiet, listening to the rhythmic clacks of George’s keyboard, until it comes to a halt and George’s voice finds him.

“Tell me the truth.” Dream doesn’t know what George means by that. His lids flutter shut and he braces himself for the impact that’s about to come. “I got you there, didn’t I? I won this time.” Dream’s eyes crack open again, curiously peeking at George’s icon on discord as if he can see him.

Maybe he gives George too much credit.

“Talk to you later, Dream.” Dream hears George disconnect before the icon disappears from the voice channel. A text flies through right after.

I bet you're not man enough to kiss the homies. ;)

He *definitely* gives George too much credit. The taunt is lighthearted, George means to brag about his “victory”, but what he doesn’t know is that Dream is very much open to the idea.

George’s lips on his, pushing and pulling just like the way their arguments go.

Dream is *too* open to the idea.

how much?

What?

how much are you betting?

George is pushing Dream too far. He’s on a steep ledge and one more blow will topple him over—will send him free falling.

And below, there’s nothing to catch him.

You just want to kiss me. Simp.

Dream is teetering and he needs to anchor himself down. He can’t fall, he’s not meant to.

never said i'd be kissing you. sapnap's my homie too. karl. quackity.

He pauses. This reply is good. It’s enough to win their little argument.

wishful thinking, georgie? sounds like you're the one that wants to kiss me.

His finger hovers over the send button, tempted to see how George would react. He would probably be flustered, Dream imagines, with his sweater paws pressed against his cheeks, trying to will away the rosy color. There would be a scoff of disbelief, followed by a flimsy insult. Dream ignores the way his heart stutters.

Ultimately, he can't bring himself to send the message so he deletes it. He pretends the idea had never come to him and waits for George's reply.

Yeah, but I know you. You wouldn't kiss them. Just me.

Dream freezes. The text does a number on him, but what follows does more.

I'm special.

'Does he know?' Dream pauses, dropping his phone onto his lap so that he can drag his hands down his face. 'Know? Know what?' Dream asks himself. There's an overwhelming urge to let the growing shadows in his room consume him.

I'm your husband until I get my visa, so of course you can only kiss me.

Dream exhales, slouching over and letting his bangs fall over his eyes. 'He doesn't know.' The reassurance is short-lived because Dream doesn't know why he's relieved in the first place. There's nothing *to* know, so why does he keep fretting over George learning secrets that don't exist?

you're so weird.

He's not lying. The thought of kissing George is weird, especially in the context of them being married. It's weird, yes, but not unwelcome.

That much, Dream will allow himself to admit.

The days fly by too quickly for Dream to fully grasp everything that's happening. It's the eve of their meetup and he's got a long drive ahead of him in just four hours, but he can't sleep.

"Oh my god. There's so many people," George mutters into the phone. He's at the airport, waiting to board his flight. "It's five in the morning, what's wrong with them." Dream rolls his eyes at the irony of that.

"You're one to talk." It had been George's decision to book a flight this early, so there was no use in complaining. However, he did it with the assumption that it'd be less crowded; George isn't exactly a social butterfly. "You'll be fine. Just stay on the phone with me, nobody's going to bother you."

"Aren't you tired?" George's question comes out as a whisper and Dream can tell he's feeling guilty. George is aware that Dream has to catch up on sleep soon or else he'll be passed out behind the steering wheel in a few hours, but Dream knows why George isn't explicitly telling him to go to sleep. It's because he's scared and as much as he feels bad for keeping Dream awake, he needs him.

And if George needs him, Dream will be there.

"Me? Tired?" Dream fights off a yawn, disguising it as a laugh. "I'm fine, Gogy. So sweet to hear that you care about me."

"Shut *up*, Dream." Dream can hear the smile in George's voice.

"If I had a dime for every time I've heard that phrase.."

"You'd have one dime if you actually listened," George interrupts him. That wiggles a chuckle out of Dream, but the silence they're trying to avoid still follows suit.

There are things Dream has wanted to say—things to help calm his own nerves—but each time he tries to address them, a lock forms around his throat. "I'm excited," he manages to say through gritted teeth. His eyes land on his suitcase which is packed to the brim with clothes that Sapnap had

picked out for him. (It's a good idea, he convinces himself. He doesn't know the first thing about fashion sense.)

"Me too," George agrees and Dream tries to ignore the split second of hesitation. He shouldn't read too much into it, lest his mind get the best of him and keep him up all night, but he can't help it. Meeting George is new and new things are frightening.

"It might be easier for you to find Sapnap, but I'll be wearing a blue shirt. With," he glances at the outfit hanging in his closet, ready to go for their trip. "- denim jeans."

"Got it. Keep my eyes peeled for a tall white boy dressed in blue and see if they have a Sapnap with them." George's voice sounds muffled. Dream imagines he's curling in on himself, chin tucked into the hood of his sweater, making him look a lot smaller than he is. "This'll be my first time seeing you. Other than the hints of your forehead I get each time you video call me."

Dream inhales sharply at that. His free hand reaches up, nimble fingers carding through tufts of dirty blonde hair. After some thought, he settles for a, "That's true." He's nervous, but he doesn't know why. It's not as if George is going to stop being friends with him for how he looks.

But would George still find him hot? Would George stand by what he said on stream the other night? About kissing him?

How would it feel to kiss George, Dream wonders. His fingers reach up, ghosting over his lips. Would it be soft and fleeting like this? Or— He presses down a little harder prying his lips apart and dragging his bottom lip down until it slips back into place. —would it be rough and an invitation for more?

"Dream?"

Dream nearly drops his phone in surprise. "Yes?" He clears his throat, trying to edge off some of the embarrassment from being caught daydreaming red handed.

"I said I have to go now." It feels surreal. "I'll text you when I land, okay?"

George is boarding the plane to meet him. George is going to be with him in a few hours.

“Okay,” Dream confirms.

The line dies, but Dream feels alive.

His visions grow clearer day by day, to the point where Dream begins to think he’s growing a bit delusional. There are nights where it’s like this, thinking of George’s lips on his, but there are also nights where it’s just the two of them in bed, pinkies hooked because they’re too shy to hold hands just yet.

Dream wonders what it would be like to finally hold George’s hands. There’s no doubt in his mind that his are bigger, mathematical proportions and all that nerd talk, but he wonders if George’s are softer than his. They look softer.

Maybe George is the type to intertwine their fingers together, filling in the gaps tightly, or maybe he’s the type to clasp their palms together, thumbs hooked while the rest of the fingers curl over the edges.

It would be nice to hold George’s hand. Dream decides that now, before he even gets the chance to, because there’s no doubt in his mind that he’s right.

These imaginations keep Dream at bay. He doesn’t want to leave. Reality is less serene; it doesn’t feel like home.

Even during the day with the sun that peeks through thick clouds, there’s no warmth.

It ends up being Sapnap who wakes Dream up instead of it being the other way around. Dream sleeps through his alarm, a consequence of keeping George company until late into the night, and Sapnap seems to already know that despite neither of them telling him.

“I figured,” Sapnap explains, lugging the last suitcase into the trunk of Dream’s car. “George always gets fidgety when he’s heading out. Once, he made me stay on the phone with him while he was at the Doctor’s.”

Dream remembers that. George had actually called him first, but Dream had been busy preparing things for his sister’s birthday. It was his suggestion to call Sapnap and despite being reluctant at first, George had done just that. Afterwards, George had given him an earful about how much he preferred having Dream to talk to in those situations.

It wasn’t that Sapnap was bad at comforting him, it was just that George wasn’t a fan of his.. ‘voodoo shit’, as he so eloquently put it.

“You drive for the first five hours and I’ll take over for the last five?” It’s not really an offer; Sapnap is already making a beeline for the passenger’s seat. “That way you’ll be the one to get off at the airport first since I’ll have to find parking.” Dream knows Sapnap just wants to get some more sleep in first, but he brings up a good point that Dream can’t dispute.

Dream climbs into the driver’s seat, fastening his seatbelt and readjusting his mirrors before leaning back. He’s nervous, that much he’s sure of, with the way his fingers tremble, but it’s too late to back out now. Not that he had any plans to, of course.

“I can’t believe this is actually happening.” Sapnap takes the words out of Dream’s mouth and Dream tosses him a glance as he starts up the car. He’s looking out the window, ripples forming on his white tee as the wind rushes past him. The grin on his face is so wide, it almost takes away from his eye bags . Sapnap leans back against his chair, getting ready to forfeit himself to slumber.

“Things are about to change.”

Dream couldn’t agree more.

It’s all he can think about as he drives past bustling cities and open plains. Everything feels so much more different now that George is going to share his experiences. It’s a new chapter in their lives. The slate is blank, waiting for them to write across it together.

Dream’s train of thoughts travels rather slowly, but each cart holds so much to unpack. Dumped over, it’s a swarm of wishful thinking (a toxic little thing called *hope*) and Dream is drowning.

Down the freeway, there's blotches of trees along the borders. They're a vibrant green, especially under the intense rays of the sun. George can't see that, so Dream will have to describe it to him.

The sky is blue, but at sunset, it's a fiery orange. Dream wants to know how George looks in the golden hour—wants to count the freckles on his face, wants to hear the elated giggle as Dream paints the picture for him.

This excitement—surely, Dream thinks, surely it's because George is his best friend.

He tosses Sapnap a quick glance. Sapnap is their best friend too, so he should feel the same way. He should feel the jitters in his stomach like Dream does.

Sapnap is still fast asleep, head tilted and pressed against the window, looking calm—too calm—and the exact opposite of how Dream feels. Dream doesn't understand why Sapnap isn't nervous.

The car in front of him turns on its brake lights just as the flow of traffic begins to slow down. Dream glances at his GPS with worry, hoping that the delay won't be too long. Thankfully, it's estimated not to be.

(Dream had gone the extra measure of planning to arrive at the airport an hour and a half earlier than George's landing simply to account for situations like this.)

He laughs to himself, watching the red lights turn on and off every other second as they inch down the highway. George would probably get irritated at that. He's a patient person, but his patience is reserved for people he cares about, this much Dream knows.

They'd experience this together—experience *red* together.

Dream hesitates, fingers drumming against his steering wheel as another thought comes to mind.

Do best friends think about experiencing colors together?

His phone dings. It's loud enough to jostle Sapnap awake and Dream snickers while he watches Sapnap try to understand where they're at.

“Can you check who that is?” Dream asks, eyes trained on the road once more as the traffic jam finally begins to loosen up. Sapnap grunts and Dream hears him remove his phone from the stand on the window.

“It’s George,” Sapnap announces, voice hoarse from having just woken up. “He says the first flight went safely and now they’re waiting for the second one to take off.”

Dream nods silently, trying his hardest to switch lanes without picturing how drowsy George must be. He’s probably huddled in his sweater, blinking rapidly to keep himself awake. He’s fresh out of a nap and his first thought is to text *Dream*.

“He also says the annoying child next to him is finally gone, but in her replacement is a weirdo that won’t stop chatting him up.”

Dream slams the breaks, almost hitting the car that races past him.

“What the fuck?” Sapnap breathes out. The car that passed them has a roaring engine and Sapnap doesn’t waste another second to flip them off. “I fucking hate show offs.”

The near-accident was actually Dream’s fault, but he doesn’t mention it.

“Ask him,” Dream rolls his tongue past his lips. “Ask him about the sky. Is it clear there like it is here?”

Sapnap doesn’t respond.

“It’s kind of cloudy.” Dream’s hands tighten their grip on the wheel as George’s voice travels through the speakers. “The sun was out for a bit earlier, but now it’s hiding.”

“Probably scared of your.. ugliness,” Sapnap replies before Dream can, eliciting a soft chuckle out of George.

“Oh it’s *you*.” George fakes a gag. “I thought I was talking to Dream.”

“He’s driving,” Sapnap clarifies. It seems to take another second for him to realize what George had said first. “Wait. *What* ? What do you mean by it’s *me*? Why’d you say it like that?” George laughs at Sapnap’s whiny complaints.

“There’s not a single cloud in sight today,” Dream says after stealing a peek at his window. “That means it’s probably gonna be super hot. You’ll hate it.”

George has never been a fan of the sun. It might be the lack of air conditioners in England or the fact that George is practically nocturnal at this point. Regardless, it makes sense why he’d prefer cloudy days to clear ones.

He’s not bringing this up to warn George for the heat he’s going to face upon arrival though; George is aware of that.

“I have to go again,” George announces. Sapnap makes an obnoxious smack with his lips, “Muah! Love you, bye!”

“Bye! See you soon, loser. - And thanks, Dream.” Before Dream can force out his own goodbye, Sapnap hangs up.

George has never been a fan of heights. Take offs during planes would be no different, Dream assumes. It’s better to focus on the sky than on the ground, in that case. So long as George was busy finding shapes in the clouds, there was less of a reason for him to worry.

Dream doesn’t know when he became so observant.

But lately, he seems to know more about George than he does about himself.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to wait?” Dream asks as Sapnap pulls the car up to the curb. Sapnap gives him a dead stare.

“How many times do I have to say it’s fine, Clay?” Dream shudders at the use of his real name. It’s not unfamiliar, but not as soothing as George saying it either.

“Look,” Sapnap continues, putting the car in park for a moment. “George said he already landed and he said not to be late. One of us has to go in there and one of us has to park this car.”

Dream doesn’t say anything. He doesn’t have to.

Sapnap reaches over, pressing the button to unlock Dream’s seatbelt. “Just go already,” he groans, shooing at the hunched over blonde man who has somehow grown an attachment to his seat. “Seriously, or else I’m going and you’re gonna have to park this shit.”

Dream opens the car door, tossing Sapnap one more uncertain look before heading out the car. Once the door snaps shut again, Sapnap drives off to look for the parking center.

Terminal 4, Dream reads off the board hanging above him as he nears the revolving door. In front of him is a lady with a sign. Maybe he should’ve brought a sign. If George gets out of baggage claim quicker than Sapnap’s arrival, he’ll have a hard time finding Dream for sure.

The airport is chilly. Dream’s hands try their best to rub away the goosebumps bubbling down his arms, but it’s little to no use. The walls of the airport are tall and covered with glass, allowing for the comfort of the sun, but Dream can’t feel its warmth.

There’s a crowd gathered by the gates, almost piling over the barricade. People are excited to see their loved ones and Dream.. Dream is the same, so he can’t blame them. He just has the leverage of being tall, so there’s no need for him to be pressed against the barrier.

His eyes fly towards the entrance of the airport, waiting for Sapnap to jog in with that classic lost look of his in his eyes. He wasn’t the best when it came to navigation, but he was a hell of a lot better in social situations than Dream.

Dream finds himself caving in, plucking at the loose threads of his ripped denim jeans. He should’ve worn something on top of this shirt. It’s far too cold and the sun is only a nuisance to his

eyes. Nothing more.

Sapnap is taking longer than Dream had expected. George could walk out any second now and Dream doesn't know if he has what it takes to approach him first. George would be lost in this maze of blurry, unknown faces and Dream—well, it would be easy for Dream to spot him.

Not only because of his height advantage but also because it's *George*, how could Dream *not* see him? (Nowadays, it feels like he's *all* Dream sees.)

But he wouldn't know what to *do*.

Would he just stand there? Awkward, shy, not knowing what to say or where to put his hands. Or would he go in for a hug? Familiar, friendly, feeling like home after what seemed like an eternity of helpless waiting.

Dream's arms hang lifelessly by his sides, fingers twitching with the urge to hold onto something. It's cold for more reasons than one now.

"Sapnap," Dream mutters under his breath, tone edged with frustration. The name feels a bit ridiculous to say in public, especially around people who don't know them. Sure, his voice is a slither above a whisper, but the embarrassment weighs down on him nonetheless. "Hurry the fuck up.."

Locating Sapnap becomes more of a distraction than a job. At least while he's looking for Sapnap, he doesn't have to worry about making eye contact with George and having to find a way to say *I'm Dream, sources: dude trust me*.

There's a slight tug to the hem of his shirt as he spots Sapnap's patch of brunette curls bob in through the revolving doors. "Excuse me," he mumbles, not having time to entertain the stranger. He needs to find Sapnap before he lands himself in a situation he can't get out of.

"Blue."

Dream has no time to register what's happening. Arms wind around his waist and heat spreads rapidly; from his chest outwards or from the touch inwards, he's not sure.

“Clay.” The fire is definitely starting by his waist. “It’s you.” George’s arms are tight, secure; Dream feels lightheaded.

By the time he’s ready to turn around and hug George (so tight he might break him), George is pulling away with a shy smile on his face. His hands are already tugging down the sleeves of his hoodie and Dream feels a lot fainter, if even possible.

“How did you know?” He asks, breathless and inches away from scooping George into his arms.

“I just did,” George shrugs, tilting his head up so he can finally look Dream in the eyes. Dream feels George’s sheathed palm press against his cheek. The touch is meant to be fleeting, he can tell, but George lingers for longer than either of them expect.

As if he’s scared someone’s going to take Dream away.

“Tall. Blonde, somewhat. Green eyes,” George mutters. “To be fair, they’re yellow to me, but you said they were green.”

Dream lets out a wheezed chuckle at that, lungs gasping for air. It feels much, much more real now. “You’re such an idiot,” he mutters, full of mirth. George’s smile is playful, but before he has a chance to verbally reply, Sapnap yanks him away from Dream and into his own arms.

“Dude!” He lands several pats down George’s back. “It’s you! You’re here!” They pull away and Sapnap gives George a judgemental once over. “Weird taste in fashion, as expected.”

“Fuck off,” George laughs, pushing at Sapnap’s chest with his hand. “You’re one to talk with your stupid gray shirt. It’s so bland.”

“It’s red,” Sapnap lies, mischievous to a harmful degree.

Dream frowns, “No, it’s not. Stop that.” He doesn’t know why he says it with such heavy distaste when it’s clear George isn’t upset. Sapnap catches on, eyeing him with a blank stare that says much more than any look he’s given Dream before.

“Where’s the car?”

Dream and Sapnap break eye contact, both of them zeroing in on George. In the short time that they were distracted, George’s absentminded fiddling had led to him creating a bow tie with his hoodie strings. Dream feels the need to take a picture.

“In the parking lot,” Sapnap answers, turning around swiftly. “Follow me, boys.”

The walk back is silent for the most part. Sapnap is busy trying to remember the directions and George is in awe of his surroundings. Dream doesn’t think airports in America are much different than those in England, but George’s eyes almost sparkle with delight so he doesn’t say anything. That is until they face the harsh humidity of the southern air.

“You might wanna take your hoodie off,” Dream mumbles, scratching the nape of his neck. He doesn’t spare George a glance, no matter how much he wants to. He’s stolen enough glances already; it’s borderline obsessive.

“I don’t have anything underneath,” George replies. Dream inhales sharply, tipping his head up and looking anywhere but straight ahead because then he can see George through the corner of his eyes.

Don’t think too deep, *don’t think too deep*, he repeats it enough for it to be his personal mantra.

“I was just joking.” Dream runs a hand through his hair at George’s confession. “Why are you so nervous around me, Dream?” George is being impish for sure, but there’s truth to his question. He knows Dream is nervous, but he’s trying to lighten the mood up—to cut through the awkward tension lying in between them.

Neither of them know the reason behind Dream’s silence.

“I’m not nervous,” Dream lies, forcing himself to meet George’s gaze so that he can sell the act. George rolls his eyes, clearly not believing a single word that leaves Dream’s mouth. “Okay, maybe a little,” Dream corrects. “But only because you’re so pretty.”

Now it's George's turn to be stunned into silence.

"What's wrong with you?" He says out of reflex when he can finally form the words. There's a smile on his face, but he doesn't give Dream the satisfaction of seeing it for too long.

"Can we save this for later?" Sapnap pleads, unlocking the trunk of the car so that they can shove George's luggage in there with the rest. "Preferably when I'm not around to hear it."

"It's a jokey joke," George defends, arms folding over his chest.

"A running one," Sapnap scoffs, hopping into the driver's seat before Dream can. This confuses Dream because they had originally planned for him to be the one driving for the rest of the trip. "I'm beginning to think it's not a joke anymore."

"You're weird," George retaliates.

Dream hovers awkwardly by the door of the passenger's seat. "Just sit in the back with him already," Sapnap snorts, nodding his head to where George is seated in the backseat. George pats the space next to him, welcoming and not at all flustered like he was a second ago.

"Come sit with your bestie, Dream," George teases. Dream almost calls shotgun again. *Almost.*

When they're all finally seated in the car, Sapnap starts up the engine and Dream hears a sigh of relief leaving George when the air conditioner begins to stir to life. "Neither of you get the aux cord because your music taste sucks," Sapnap states bluntly, scrolling through his Spotify playlist.

Behind him, George and Dream sit quietly, occupied by their individual thoughts. Dream tries not to think about how close George's hands are to his. He tries not to return to the thoughts about holding his hand. He tries not to reach out and hook his pink over George's, a tiny but meaningful touch; one that voices more of his thoughts than he can currently comprehend.

"This is pretty cool," George says after Sapnap has finally begun driving. The latter is too busy jamming out to his songs to hear him, but Dream does.

“Yeah, it is,” he agrees wholeheartedly.

George turns to face him and in that moment, when he smiles so genuinely with his eyes formed into perfect crescents, Dream begins to understand more about himself than he wants to.

The sun creeps in through the windows, beating down on the back of Dream’s neck, but the warmth he feels is from something entirely different.

George’s focus returns to the passing cars outside.

But Dream, *Dream*—he burns.

Chapter End Notes

George is in America, dudududu.

The next chapter will most likely be where the actual bulk of the plot starts to take off. These two chapters.. treat them like somewhat of a preface, I guess? Actually, the majority of the next chapter might Also feel like an intro. I don't Know-- We'll see as we move along!

I've been writing a lot more than I initially expected per chapter, so that might move things along quicker. I'm hoping to finish most of this before uni work catches up to me so that I don't have people waiting too long. But I will mention delays as they come, if needed!

Thank you all for reading this far and again, comments are welcome and appreciated!
:D I love hearing everyone's thoughts.

P.S. If you guys saw me fuck up my notes earlier, no you did Not. (IT'S 3AM FOR ME I'M SORRRYYY.)

Reborn in Flames

Chapter Summary

Even while knowing that the waters are treacherous, Dream will dive headfirst if George leads him to them. All the nightmares that lurk underneath the beguiling, calm surface, are nothing compared to the aches with which his heart still yearns.

Love is the most challenging of all obstacles.

Chapter Notes

Same old, same old. If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

(Oh my god this is much longer than the other chapters... I did not expect that. Hopefully it makes up for the wait.)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Meeting Karl and Alex is an experience to say the least. Karl wastes no time dragging them all into a group hug, pointing out that they can barely see Alex's height. Sapnap laughs at that, knocking his head fondly against Karl's.

Normally, Dream would join in on the laughter too, but he's too focused on the way George is pressed up beside him, face squished against Dream's chest. Karl's arms aren't long enough to reach around all of them, so naturally the circle is tight fit.

"Ow, you're hurting me," George whines, yanking his head back when they're granted their freedom. The pin sewn onto Dream's shirt has left an indent on George's cheek and Dream instinctively reaches out, brushing his thumb over the mark.

"Sorry," he whispers, trying to make it up to George with soothing touches and George winces, but doesn't move away. Their moment is short-lived.

"We've got enough beds for everyone," Karl applauds himself, gesturing down the wide hallway that they stand at the edge of. "But not enough rooms, so pick your roommates."

Alex is quick to call dibs on the bigger room and Sapnap shares his interests with the same amount of eagerness. Dream watches them race off into the room, leaving the rest of them in the dust.

“Well,” Karl says, making finger guns at the two remaining guests. “Knock yourselves out! I’ll let you guys unpack for a bit and then we’ll have dinner downstairs. I ordered pizza!” Dream finds himself staring at Karl’s retreating figure until he’s completely out of sight, disappearing into his own room.

“Come on then,” George mumbles, leading the way to the room far down the hallway. Dream follows a few steps behind, not wanting to seem too pushy, and his eyes wander around to take in the decorations that liven up the place.

Once they reach the room, the first thing Dream notices is that there *are* two beds. Karl didn’t lie about that, thankfully. George claims the one near the door, leaving Dream to occupy the one by the window. He assumes it’s because the sun will irritate him quicker and George is a *huge* fan of sleeping.

“I’m kinda glad you’re my roommate,” George announces, opening his suitcase and folding some of the clothes into the empty drawers available for them. “Alex and Sapnap are super loud at night.”

“Real names?” Dream asks, grinning lopsidedly at the sudden switch. He’s too busy staring at George to organize his own clothes.

George shrugs, “I don’t want them to think we’re only here on business terms.” It’s a good point, Dream concedes.

“Well, I wouldn’t be surprised if they came barging in here, demanding us to stream with them at strange hours.” Dream can practically *hear* Alex’s voice already, begging George to wake up and join him on GTA. Same with Sapnap and dragging him out of bed to play CS:GO.

George scoffs, flopping onto the bed when he deems that he has unpacked enough. “I’m going to flip them off and go back to bed.”

Dream rolls his eyes at that. “They’re just going to carry you out.”

“As if,” George mumbles, voice muffled by the pillow his face is pressed into.

“Really, George?” A laugh leaves Dream as he tosses the smaller man a glance, “You’re tiny and you weigh nothing. I could pick you up with one hand if I wanted to.”

“Again with this one hand crap,” George huffs, pushing himself up into a sitting position. “Try me then, if you’re so sure.”

Dream stills at the challenge. There’s a familiar feeling that stirs at the pit of his stomach, prompting the twitch in his fingers. Slowly, his eyes crawl up George’s frame and he imagines his hands following in the same path. George isn’t looking at him, too busy picking at his fingernails.

That won’t do.

Dream stands up, walking over to George, who only realizes he’s standing there when a shadow casts over him.

“What?” George asks, looking up at Dream through his lashes. Dream’s breath hitches and he asks himself the same question: *What? What is he doing?*

“One hand,” Dream repeats, moving his left arm behind his back. His knee touches the bed, creating a soft dip in the blanket, and George leans back.

“Are you serious?” Dream hears George ask and he watches as his friend tries to rearrange his positioning. George’s hands land behind him, propping his body up as Dream leans in closer and closer.

“No,” George shakes his head. Dream latches his free hand onto George’s left wrist and takes away the mobility of his dominant arm, causing George to flail pathetically. “Dream,” George warns, but given their current circumstances, Dream doesn’t see him as much of a threat.

(To be honest, he never was.)

George scoots further up the bed, but Dream’s grip on his wrist gets stronger until it’s borderline

bruising. “Arse,” he hears George mutter under his breath. There’s a moment where they both remain completely still and Dream begins to think George has given up already, but the second he loosens his hold, George twists his wrist. He grabs onto Dream’s forearm and yanks him forward before throwing his left leg over Dream’s waist and flipping them over until he’s got the taller man pinned underneath him.

“*Ha!*” George triumphs with a shit-eating grin. He’s so close that his fringe tickles Dream’s forehead. If Dream wanted to, he could nudge his head forward and their lips would touch; it was close enough to seem accidental.

Being a Leo means that Dream is competitive and therefore he’s not going to go down without a fight.

“Cute,” he sneers and relishes the flicker of fear in George’s eyes. His legs spread, knocking aside George’s knees until he falls flush against Dream and the rest is history.

Dream easily flips them over and manages to get both of George’s wrists in one hand, pinning them above his head in a display of strength. “Ha,” Dream mimics, blowing a puff of air at George’s face and smiling affectionately when George squeezes his eyes shut and scrunches up his nose. It really is fascinating how Dream is the younger one between the two of them and by three years at that.

“Get off of me, you oaf,” George groans, wiggling underneath Dream but being unable to free himself in the slightest. Much to his distaste, his struggles only heighten Dream’s pride.

Dream shakes his head at George’s order, “Nah, don’t think I will.” Now that he’s proved to George that pinning him with one hand is easy work, Dream frees his left arm. “What’s wrong, *Georgie*? Didn’t you say you could take me?”

George freezes underneath him, shifting his gaze so that it’s no longer meeting Dream’s, and Dream dares to cup George’s chin with his left hand. “Oh, c’mon now,” he whispers, tipping George’s head up to get the brunet to look at him. It doesn’t work. George’s cheeks are flushed pink from humiliation and his lower lip is caught between his rows of teeth.

“*George*,” Dream drops an octave without meaning to and he drawls out the name. He presses his forehead against George’s and does his best not to brush their noses against each other (because only God knows the amount of self-restraint he would have left).

George gives in, looking up at him with narrowed eyes. “What, Clay?”

“I wouldn’t be speaking with an attitude if I were you,” Dream mumbles. He’s about to say something else, something a little dangerous, but someone clears their throat behind him.

“Again?” Sapnap asks when Dream tosses a glance over his shoulder. Both of Sapnap’s hands are raised, covering Karl’s and Alex’s eyes. Karl tugs down Sapnap’s arm just a bit, peeking at the scene unfolding in front of them, but Alex uncharacteristically remains silent.

“It’s not what it looks like,” Dream tries and in the split second that he’s distracted, George shoves him away. It looks incriminating, the way George’s sweater is hiked up and his cheeks are burning red. To make matters worse, George has worried his lip to the point where it’s swollen and on the verge of breaking.

“Right,” Sapnap doesn’t sound like he believes a single word coming out of Dream’s mouth. George stands up and rushes past the trio blockading the door. Dream is confused as to where exactly George is headed because Karl hasn’t shown them around the house at all, but he doesn’t have the chance to ask because Sapnap begins to interrogate him.

“Is there something going on between you two that we should know?” Sapnap raises an eyebrow, unamused. Dream shakes his head, trying to play it off as naturally as possible.

“Made a bet to see who was stronger.”

Sapnap squints at that, “Why would George bet on that? You’re clearly stronger.” Dream shrugs and scratches the nape of his neck awkwardly.

“You know George. He’s stubborn.” That seems to sell the story and Sapnap nods off in somewhat of an agreement.

Alex speaks next, “I thought it was all for show. I didn’t know you guys were actually together.”

“What the fuck, Alex?” Dream feels bewildered at just how far Alex is reaching with that conclusion. Then he reasons that given what they just saw without context, the assumption made *some* sense. Not a lot, but some.

“No, no, no,” Dream shakes his head and forms an ‘x’ over his chest with his arms. “No way. George and I are just best friends. You’ve never wrestled with your best friends?” Dream shoots a question back to try and change the direction of the conversation.

Karl falls for it, thankfully. “Hey, Alex, I’ll bet you 50 bucks that I can beat you.”

“Karl, I swear to fucking god. Do *not* fucking touch me,” Alex warns, taking a step back into the hallway and bumping into George in the process. “Ow, George. Dude, I thought you were colorblind not *blind* blind.”

“*You’re* the one that walked into *me!*” George squeaks, affronted by the accusation. “Karl, I’m betting 20 on you, don’t let me down.” It’s in his nature to be petty.

“Say no more!” Karl exclaims, racing after Alex who has already taken off. They’re long gone in matter of seconds.

Sapnap mumbles something quietly and Dream leans forward, “What’d you say?” He gets a dull stare in return.

“I said,” Sapnap says, “I need new friends.”

“You don’t mean that,” George pouts at the joke and Sapnap fakes a gag at the sight.

“Oh, I do,” Sapnap backs out of the room with his hands raised in exasperation. “I definitely do!”

George and Dream laugh as Sapnap departs and Dream scurries off of George’s bed when he realizes that he hasn’t moved out of the position George had left him in. “You know,” George begins as Dream returns to his side of the room. “I thought he was gonna be the most chaotic one out of all of us.”

“True, he is the youngest,” Dream agrees and then peeks out the window just in time to see Karl tackle Alex onto the ground in their backyard. Sapnap walks into the scene a little bit after, phone at hand to record the stupidity on display. “I think he’s just shy,” Dream reasons.

“He’ll open up.”

Alex flops onto the floor in defeat and Karl looks up, grinning mischievously at Sapnap who puts away his phone and slowly walks backwards. Karl is quicker, pouncing onto Sapnap before he has the chance to escape and sending them both tumbling onto the grass as well.

“Karl’s good at getting him to do that.”

The sun is beginning to set, Dream notices. It’s hanging just above the horizon now, encased by splashes of red, orange, and yellow. Dream wonders what it looks like through George’s eyes. “Sunset,” he announces and George quietly draws up next to him. The fleeting touch of George’s hand brushing against his immediately distracts Dream.

“Everyone says the sunset is beautiful.” George lifts a hand, slender fingers softly pressing against the glass. It seems longing. “I don’t really understand it,” George sighs. Dream knows he shouldn’t, but he can’t resist stealing a glance at George. The sight punches Dream in the gut before he even realizes what’s happening.

This is what he’s been picturing in his head for so long. *This*: George’s dark eyes turning a lighter shade of brown, George’s pale skin dancing in the orange and red hues, George’s freckles becoming apparent enough to mirror constellations; everything about George in the golden hour is ethereal.

His imagination had never done this reality justice.

Dream can’t tear his eyes away from George and George catches him staring, the corners of his lips quirking upwards shyly. “Why are you looking at me like that?” George asks, laughing to ease up the awkwardness that rests between them.

Because you’re beautiful. You’re unreal. You’re everything Heaven’s missing out on.

“Eyelash,” Dream lies, reaching up to brush his thumb over George’s cheekbone. He doesn’t expect George to close his eyes and lean into the touch. The tips of George’s long, curled lashes kiss the pad of Dream’s finger and Dream uses every ounce of self-control he has left to will his hand away.

(Before it ventures places it shouldn't.)

"Did you get it?" Dream thinks it's unfair for George to look up at him through his lashes like that. His mind rockets into the gutter, picturing what other situations George would be in to give Dream that same look. Most of them circle back to George on his knees; it's sinful.

He pretends to flick away the imaginary lash he had swept off of George's face. "All done," he says and then turns around, heading for the door. He doesn't bother waiting for George, only calling out to him over his shoulder. "Come on, they're gonna think something's up if we don't go join them." George is a step behind him soon enough.

"Boys!" Karl calls out when he sees them descend down the flight of stairs. "So glad you could join us! I'm warming up the pizza." His hair is sticking up in weird directions and there's a stubborn leaf clinging to his bangs. Dream is about to inform him on the matter, but Alex and Sapnap both bring a finger up to their lips, effectively shushing him.

George sits down on the empty chair next to Alex, earning him a half-assed insult, and Dream sits beside Sapnap who slides over a cup of water.

"Thanks," Dream says, finishing it in one go. His throat is a lot drier than he remembers it being, but he knows why that's the case. Across the table, George smiles victoriously and pushes Alex out of his chair.

"Loser," George snickers after sticking his tongue out childishly. His eyes are full of mirth, much like Alex's, although the latter tries to play it off with a glare.

"Dickhead," Alex responds, taking his seat once again. Karl turns around, sliding the box of pizza to the middle of the table before sitting on the other side of Dream.

"Settle down, settle down," he says and then passes out the plates as well. Dream helps him reach the other side of the table, jolting when George's fingers brush over his own. George gives him a look, but it's more playful than suspicious, much to Dream's relief.

"We should play a game," Sapnap suggests, looking around the table to see if anyone agrees with him. He gets slow nods in response and an offhand comment from Alex.

“Don’t talk with your mouth full.” Ironically, Alex’s mouth is also full, but Dream realizes that that must be the joke.

“Truth or dare?” Karl giggles in a way that sounds more evil than cute, but Dream doesn’t miss the way Sapnap’s eyes droop at the sides, expressing endearment. “We can vlog it.”

“Camera shy,” Dream reminds them, casting his gaze on his hands out of guilt. Sapnap nudges his shoulder with his own to silently reassure him and Karl dismisses recording the session.

“We can film other stuff,” George says, twirling his cup around on the granite countertop. “Let’s keep tonight to just the five of us.”

Dream knows how eager George is to record anything and almost everything. With their distance being overseas, it would make sense for George to want to save as much as possible; who knows when he’d be able to come back, after all. However, George’s nature is to be selfless. Dream knows George is not jumping at the gun to prop up his camera because Dream is uncomfortable *and* because he doesn’t want Dream to feel left out. It’s common courtesy when it comes to friendship, really, but Dream still finds himself feeling a way he shouldn’t.

(Seriously, Dream has never wanted to praise human decency so badly.)

These emotions have definitely not settled in overnight. They’ve been bottled up for a while and Dream doesn’t know when he knocked the cap off, but he did and now everything is spilling—it’s pouring—and it takes all of Dream’s power to seal it back up.

“Sounds good to me,” Alex chirps, taking another big bite out of the slice of pizza he’s munching on. It’s his second slice which, to Dream, means he eats slow. Dream is on his fourth slice, the same as Sapnap, and Karl is on his third.

George finishes his first slice. “I’m full,” he announces with an uncharismatic burp. The rest of them gawk at him. “What?”

“No, you’re not,” Dream argues, shoving another slice in George’s face. “You haven’t eaten anything yet.”

“I ate on my flight here,” George corrects, swatting away Dream’s hand. The taller man is persistent, staring at George with a concerned pout. He’s not going to force George to eat of course, but it doesn’t mean he can’t worry.

“You’re telling me you’re passing on American pizza,” Karl says, swallowing the bite in his mouth before frowning in George’s direction. “For airplane food.”

“Bonkers,” Sapnap snorts and then wipes the corners of his mouth with a napkin. “I always knew you were a weirdo, but this is a new low even for you.”

George rolls his eyes, “Whatever.” He’s got half a smirk tugged on his lips and Dream gets so carried away with staring that he doesn’t realize the pizza slice he’s holding is dripping cheese onto the table.

“Okay, rule number one: no dares that are career jeopardizing,” Karl outlines. If he’s staring directly at Alex, nobody says anything of it.

Other than Alex of course. “Daring someone to jump into the pool butt naked is *not* career jeopardizing.”

“And when a stalker takes a photo and uploads it, then what?” Karl squints, but it’s basically a glare.

“Say it’s photoshop, easy.”

“Oh yeah? Wanna try it? I’ll take a photo of y—”

“Can we *please* get back to the game,” Sapnap groans. Dream and George are sat on either side of him, both leaning onto the youngest man for support when they burst out into hysterics.

Alex grabs the quarter-full water bottle placed in the middle of the circle, using it as a microphone. “Dream, truth or dare?” There’s something in the way he grins that has Dream’s flight or fight instincts kicking in.

“You didn’t even spin the bottle,” he points out, concealing his nerves with a chuckle and a facade of nonchalance. You can never feel too safe around Alex (because chances are: you aren’t).

“I’m setting an example.”

“Just spin the bottle,” George steps in and reaches over to flick Alex in the knee.

“One day I’m gonna ‘flinch’ and accidentally roundhouse kick you back to Europe,” Alex mumbles, eliciting a laugh from George. “But fine, party poopers.” He places the bottle back down and gives it a good twirl.

The bottle spins and spins and spins until it finally lands on Sapnap. “Truth or dare?” Alex asks, an infamous giggle at the end of his question.

“Da-” Alex nearly jumps out of his seat in excitement. “Nevermind, truth.”

“What the fuck? Alright, motherfucker, alright-listen here buddy.” Harboring the blandest poker face he can manage, Alex heaves out a sigh. “Whatever, I don’t even care! Who’s your favorite.. I don’t fucking know.. youtuber that doesn’t do minecraft?”

“Lame,” Dream snorts. Alex flips him off without hesitation.

“Uh,” Sapnap leans back, resting his weight on his hands. “Karl?”

“Karl literally streamed Tales From the SMP two days ago.” George stares at Sapnap incredulously, nudging his side with an elbow. “Say someone else, loser.”

“Fine, Mr. Beast,” Sapnap shrugs, reaching over to spin the bottle. “Because Karl’s in his videos.” When he laughs, Dream is the only one to join him. George spares him a chuckle, but Alex remains vaguely unamused and Karl is busy picking at a lint on his sweater.

“Dream!” Sapnap rejoices as the bottle stops, pointing at his best friend who is hunched over in defeat. “Truth or dare?”

“Aw, I wanted to ask Dream.” Alex’s whining is to be expected; his goal—Dream thinks—is to make Dream’s life miserable.

“Dare,” Dream might lose his dignity tonight, but he knows Sapnap won’t push him too far. At least not on the first night.

“I dare you to give me your mom’s number.”

“You already *have* my mom’s number,” Dream reminds him, scoffing at the failed joke.

“Give it to me then!” Karl and Alex shout at the same time, sparing each other a glare as if they were rivals. “No, *me*, ” they both argue.

“Amazing,” George says, leaning over to look at Dream with a raised eyebrow. “They’re fighting in sync. Your mom has magical powers Dream.”

“Oh yeah, of course *you’d* know, George,” Sapnap jokes, earning a concerned ‘*what?!*’ from Dream. “Give it to both of them then, Dream.”

For a second, Dream stares really hard at the both of them. Karl’s hands are clasped together and he’s got that lonesome puppy dog look on his face. Alex, on the other hand, is smirking with his eyebrows raised, resembling the Devil reincarnation in every way.

“Absolutely not,” Dream decides.

“What? Don’t chicken out!” Alex persists, lightly tapping Karl on the arm for backup. Karl doesn’t get the memo. “Call him a pussy.”

“Pussy!”

Dream pinches the bridge of his nose and then reluctantly (*very* reluctantly) shares her contact information with both of them. “Only for emergencies,” he emphasizes. With how giddy Karl and Alex look, he knows that his rule is going to go ignored.

While they’re busy drafting messages to his mom, Dream spins the bottle. It lands on Karl, who chooses ‘dare’ without hesitation. “I dare you to..” Dream trails off, unsure what direction him or the game is headed. There are eyes on him, all pairs except one. Sapnap is playing with the hem of his shorts absentmindedly.

“Let Alex tweet something off your account.”

“Yes!” Alex shouts, practically flinging himself onto Karl once the taller man pulls out his phone with a heavy sigh. Karl stares at Dream with a blank expression on his face as he hands over his dignity and pride to Alex.

“Sapnap, help me with this,” Alex says, scooting over and knocking George aside. Dream watches as George’s lips part, complaint hanging on the tip of his tongue, and as they close when George decides Alex isn’t worth his time.

“Wait, I wanna make sure it’s not horrific,” Karl mumbles, gesturing at Dream to switch seats with him. Dream nods, wiggling out of Karl’s way and then sliding himself over to where his friend was previously seated. “Career-jeopardizing,” Karl comments, forcing a pout out of both Alex and Sapnap who then brainstorm for new ideas.

“Scale of 1 to 10,” George elbows Dream gently and then nods his head in the trio’s direction. “How bad do you think it’s gonna be?”

“Alex is gonna push forward to an 11 but Karl is gonna whine for a 6 and Sapnap is gonna compromise with a..8.” Dream’s hunch is based purely on Alex and Karl playfully arguing while Sapnap nudges them away from each other before they end up in another impromptu wrestling match. “Your bet?”

Dream glances over. George is already facing him. “9,” the brit whispers, a cheeky grin on his face.

And for a minute, it feels as if it’s just the two of them. George looking up at Dream while they

quietly stare at each other, matching visages full of glee.

Dream can allow himself to enjoy this.

“Ayo,” Karl begins to read aloud, grabbing everyone’s attention. (If it takes a little longer to get ahold of Dream, it’s definitely not because he watches George’s lashes flutter in confusion). “*Why is George’s mom kinda... and then a picture of me doing my signature pose.*”

“Why do you guys feel the need to include me in everything?” George groans, tossing his head back in frustration. Dream doesn’t know why he has such a strong urge to rake his eyes down the expanse of George’s throat. Pale and inviting.

“That is not true,” Sapnap says with a shake of his head and Alex makes a noise of agreement. Next to them, Karl rolls around in embarrassment from the notifications that flood in from his recent tweet.

“It *is* true!” George accuses, snapping his head back down to look at them with a half-assed glare. “Like during jackbox, it’s always George this or Gogy that.” He’s only met with more disagreement, but Dream knows that George is right.

“Maybe once or twice,” Alex surrenders, hiding the confession underneath a cough. He’s got a boyish grin on his face, like he always does, and George can’t stay mad.

“Okay, my turn,” Karl sits up once he’s gone through all five stages of grief, reaching acceptance with a broken will. The bottle spins and spins and *spins*— God, Dream thinks, if Karl can give the bottle this heavy of a spin, he definitely did win against Alex in wrestling.

“George!” Karl squeals in excitement, almost toppling over as he engulfs George in an excited hug. Dream makes space for them when Karl leans in, speaking in a hushed tone as if they were sharing a secret. Everyone can still hear him.

“Tell us about your first kiss. It can be either a truth or dare if you think about it so—and you *always* dodge this one, dude!”

“Um,” George laughs, shoving Karl away with a grimace. “No,” he says firmly, not looking to budge. Karl doesn’t let him off the hook easily.

“What do you mean *no*? That’s not in the rules, nimrod.”

“No means no,” George emphasizes and Sapnap snorts from across the circle. Alex straightens his posture and then dips his head down politely in George’s direction.

“Will you please reconsider?” It earns him a punch on the arm from Sapnap, but they both laugh it off.

“He said he’s never kissed anyone,” Sapnap mentions, leaning back to give George a skeptic stink eye. “I doubt that’s still true. If it even was in the first place.” Dream frowns a bit at that. George wouldn’t lie about something like that, would he?

“None of your business,” George mumbles, playing with the sleeves of his shirt. It sets off alarms in Dream’s head and as much as he wants to know the answer himself, he knows better than to push.

“Loosen up on him guys,” Dream says, playing his concern off with a chuckle. “Ask him something else. You sound like one of his fangirls donating to see if their pure little Gogy is still on the market.”

“Pure?” George repeats with a sharp laugh and his eyes meet Dream’s for a quick second. There’s something unreadable in his expression that has Dream looking down at his lap, unable to process words.

“Yeah, ask me something else,” George moves on. There’s a huddled discussion between Karl, Alex, and Sapnap. Dream feels a bit excluded, but he supposes it’s because he’s a bit *too* protective of George.

He doesn’t say anything. Letting the troublemakers have their way once in a while shouldn’t be too horrible. Right?

“Alright, no homo, but name one thing you like about all of us,” Sapnap says once the trio disperses. They all have their phones out, ready to save this moment for blackmail history.

“All of you? That’s hard,” George jokes, threading his eyebrows together to seem deep in thought. “Sapnap,” he begins, shaking his head a bit as if he can’t think of anything. “You’re.. not afraid to speak your mind. I respect that.”

Sapnap goes a bit giddy, obviously not expecting George to actually go through with the plan. Karl nudges him over, sitting directly in front of George with a grin so wide it’s a bit creepy.

“Karl, you give good hugs and put a lot of effort into your streams,” George shrugs and swiftly dodges the long arms that shoot out to grab him. “Nice sweater, by the way.” Karl hums in gratitude and then promptly scoots over for Alex.

“Big Q,” George purses his lips together. Alex is almost shaking with excitement, mumbling a mantra of *‘let’s go’* s. “You’re.. not dog water today.” The smile on Alex’s face drops, drawing a laugh out of Dream.

“Seriously? Alright,” Alex says, rolling his eyes with no malice. “Alright, very funny, George. Haha, so funny. What a comedian, really. World class.”

George is busy dying in a fit of giggles to respond properly at first but when he finally calms down, he seeks for forgiveness. “I’m joking! I’m joking. You’re very loud but it’s nice. Welcoming and fresh.. makes people feel safe. You never make anyone feel left out.”

Alex is evidently taken aback. He pockets his phone and doesn’t say anything for a few seconds.

And then, very meekly, “I love you.” He’s smiling genuinely. It’s a smile that doesn’t falter even when George shies away from saying it back to him.

“Now for you,” George feigns exhaustion, fluttering his eyes shut. Dream retaliates by reaching out and grabbing George’s hips, turning the smaller man to face him. George yelps, hooking his fingers into Dream’s shirt despite only being moved a centimeter or two. “Jeez, I’m getting to it! Patience!”

In the background, Sapnap scoffs. Dream chooses to ignore it. He wants to hear what George has to say more than anything.

“I appreciate you,” George smiles, avoiding eye contact narrowly. “You know when you send

those long messages during like.. thanksgiving or New Year's?" Dream nods slowly. George can't see that, but they continue nonetheless. "... I always reply with something short and simple, but that's because I get nervous. You mean a lot to me, I hope you know that. I couldn't have gotten where I am without you—I wouldn't even be here.. *here* without you."

George splays his fingers across his thigh and Dream can tell he's trying to find something to distract himself from his nerves. His cheeks and ears are cherry red by now, but Dream spares him from teasing and so do the others. For the moment, at least.

"You're a great friend. You're always there for me.. when I had that nightmare the other night, it meant a lot that you-," George gestures awkwardly with his hands and Dream finds it endearing.

"-stayed up with me. Made sure I was okay. You do all these little things and I notice, I do. I don't know how to voice my thoughts and feelings explicitly because I'm awkward but.."

There's a pause, almost like George is contemplating if he should continue or not. Dream prays for the former.

"I love you, Clay."

This is not good, this is *not good*.

Dream feels the arrow puncture his chest and ram itself into his heart. On the tail end is a slip with George's name; the ink is golden and it drips, mixing with the feelings that pour from Dream's heart.

How can he experience both Heaven and Hell at the same time?

"Oh god, that was so weird," George laughs nervously, covering his face with his arms. There's laughter in the distance as well as Karl's cooing, Alex's teasing, and Sapnap's fake gagging. Dream can't join in on the fun.

"Can we move on?" George sounds very, very flustered. Normally, that would have Dream pushing George's buttons until he's had enough fun, but this time, Dream feels nervous. More nervous than George, which says a lot because George has his face buried in his hands.

“Aww, is little Gogy embarrassed?” Alex speaks several pitches higher than usual. “Little baby can’t handle confessing to his *Dweam*.”

Karl spreads his arms, beckoning George over. “Come on, Gogy, I’ll protect you.” George flips him off and Karl giggles.

“I’m tired,” Sapnap announces abruptly. He straightens his posture and stretches his arms over his head, letting out a sleepy exhale. “George, hurry up and ask Alex already.”

The game becomes background noise for Dream starting there. While his friends toss around ideas to get back at Alex for all the harmless teasing he’s done over the months they’ve known each other, Dream tries to figure out what’s got his head spinning so badly. He stands up, excusing himself for the night, but nearly trips over his own feet as he races to his room. Along with their mild laughter, he can hear them question him, but he doesn’t spare them any answers.

Right now, he needs to be alone.

Dream makes the mistake of slamming the door shut. He’s not thinking straight and he nudges the door a little harder than he should. It makes a loud sound and Dream cringes.

Nothing happens. After spending a few seconds contemplating whether or not he should apologize for the noise, he decides to simply lay face down in bed. It’s better not to create a problem when one doesn’t exist.

I love you, Clay.

Why, why, *why* can’t Dream stop hearing George’s voice in his head? Repeating that one phrase over and over again almost like he’s never heard George say anything else.

This isn’t the first time George has said he’s loved him. It’s rare, but it has happened before. So, why does it feel different now? Why does hearing his name—his real name, *Clay*— give his heart the hiccups.

Dream is lost in his thoughts and he doesn’t hear the soft knocking on the door until the handle is

jingling. He stops tracing weird shapes onto the sheets with his finger and instead glances at the door as it pushes slightly ajar.

George slips in and lightly shuts the door behind him.

“Hey.” Dream hates the way his voice trembles when he greets George. It gets him a concerned frown. The bed dips when George sits down on the edge of it and Dream freezes when George’s hand brushes aside his messy fringe.

“Hi. You okay?” George pulls his hand away from Dream’s dirty blonde locks, letting it rest on his own lap. “You left so suddenly.”

“Sapnap said he was tired and I realized I was too,” Dream lies, fluttering his eyes shut. A second later, he discerns a soft push and finds himself peeking up at George again. “What?”

“Scoot over,” George says, staring down at Dream expectantly. Dream doesn’t move because he’s far too suspicious about George’s intentions. “You’re clearly upset and you’re not telling me why so we’re just gonna lie here until you feel better.”

Something churns inside of Dream. His heart feels like a damp rag being twisted until the remnants spill. It’s being squeezed dry.

Dream slides over, leaving a reasonable distance between them, and George lies down next to him. They’re looking at each other, both their chests pressed against the mattress.

George is the one who breaks the silence.

“Thanks for saving me from that stupid round.” He’s referring to Karl’s question about his first kiss and Dream accepts the sentiment with a nod. Then, George looks down, catching his lower lip between his teeth. Dream senses a struggle and without much thought, leans in to knock their heads together gently.

“Snap out of it,” he advises. Right before he’s about to pull back, George looks up at him. There’s courage, but it’s vulnerable. It’s the type of raw impulse that makes Dream scared.

He's scared to know what thoughts linger in George's mind. Is it anything like the thoughts in his own?

"Dream."

Dream hums. They tread the waters gently.

"What does it feel like to kiss somebody?"

That's not a question Dream is ready to answer. Dream hasn't kissed anyone in a long, long time. He hasn't even thought about kissing anyone—anyone other than George that is and he can't talk to George about that for obvious reasons.

George gives him time to reminisce on his past, to recall his partners, to remember what it means to be in love. It's hard. Dream's last relationship had taken a toll on him and he had sworn off them until he was ready to open his heart up again. However, with his career taking off, he never had ample time and his love life began collecting dust.

That's not said bitterly, of course. Dream likes being single; he likes it a lot.

(George is pouting and Dream doesn't think George knows that he is. That makes him even cuter.)

Well, Dream *liked* being single. Now, he's not so sure.

"It's nice with the right person," Dream settles for a safe answer. It's the same thing everyone says about anything related to romance, but it's all Dream can think of.

It doesn't satisfy George.

"How was your first kiss? How did it feel?"

Dream sighs, drumming his fingers against his pillow as he tries to live through his memories. "It was alright," Dream admits with a shrug. "First kisses are.. overhyped. Kisses in general. They're

nothing special.”

Just as he’s about to drop the conversation, images of his ex girlfriend rush aboard on his train of thoughts. Snippets of her smile as Dream leans in to indulge her in soft kisses, her hands as they reached out to run through Dream’s hair, when she would giggle and jokingly tuck her hair behind her ear.

“But.. some kisses are magical,” Dream breathes out. His fingers tremble and he curls them inwards before George can notice.

“They make you feel as if you’re flying and drowning at the same time. Like you’re on a wave, savoring the freedom you feel as you’re riding it, while knowing at some point you’re going to crash.”

George’s lips part in awe of the words leaving Dream’s mouth. Sure, it was no secret that Dream wanted to be a writer when he was younger, but he’s never spoken like this in front of his friends before, so he can understand George’s shock.

“When you’re in love everything is like that.”

George doesn’t say anything so Dream continues very carefully. “Why are you asking?”

George’s next sentence comes out hurried, as if he’s saying it for the sake of getting it out there. It parallels ripping a bandaid off.

"I've never kissed anybody," George confesses.

Dream doesn't understand how that's possible. Like this, basked in the comfort of the moonlight, George is beautiful.

"Really? Who wouldn't want to kiss you?" There's too much honesty in Dream's voice. It's raw—a confession practically begging to be brought to light.

"Dream," George is careful, as if his next words could lead to Dream's downfall.

And they do.

"Can you teach me how to kiss?"

To say Dream malfunctions is a simple way to put it. No, Dream straight out falls apart. (As straight as he can possibly be anyway.)

He lands himself in a choking fit, sitting up and hitting his chest with a weak fist. George frantically sits up with him, hands suspended in the air because he's not sure what to do with them, even though he wants to help.

"Is that weird? Sorry, you don't have to. I just," George pauses, reaching for Dream's water bottle that rests on the bedside lamp. Dream only coughs harder at how close George is and George becomes an even bigger mess of slippery apologies as he hands Dream the bottle.

"It's okay," Dream wheezes, taking a few sips of water and wincing as he tries to will himself not to cough again. George fiddles with his thumbs, not wanting to pick up where he left off, but Dream encourages him. "Continue?"

George closes his eyes, heaving a sigh. "I want to know how it feels and I.. want to practice. I'm *twenty three*, it'll be so.. embarrassing if I go on a date—" Dream's eye twitches. "—and I don't know how to do something so *basic* like kissing."

Dream listens intently, weighing the options he has been given.

He could deny the request, marking it as the first time in history where he's refused to help George. George would understand, but the guilt would spread like poison inside of Dream. Besides, George had trusted him enough to ask and the courage it took—Dream saw it. He saw George making such an immense effort to step out of his comfort zone.. and with him to add onto it.

So, Dream could also accept the request. Something tells him that it'll burn him like no fire could ever come close to, akin to Hell. But if Dream is going to be honest, he has already reserved a seat next to the Devil himself.

“Okay,” Dream says quietly. “I’ll do it. Kisses don’t have to mean anything, anyway.”

Right. Kisses don’t have to mean anything and yet here he is making a fuss.

“Really?” George’s eyes light up and the corners of his lips curve upwards.

“Really.” Dream confirms and slides a hand up so it rests on George’s cheek. George startles, clearly not expecting the touch despite seeing Dream’s arm move, and Dream teases him for it. “Most people close their eyes at this part.”

“Oh, are we- are we doing this now?” George asks after clearing his throat. Dream blushes and moves his hand away, realizing neither of them clarified when ‘practice’ would be happening. His eyes widen when George grabs his hand and returns it to its prior place: on his face.

“I just needed a minute,” George whispers. His eyelashes bat prettily until his lids finally come to a shut. Dream thinks George’s beauty is unfair.

“I’m gonna kiss you,” Dream tries his best to sound monotonous but his voice wavers at the end. He hopes George doesn’t hear that.

“Yeah, that was the *plan*, idi-”

Dream cuts off George’s bratty remark by pressing their lips together and that’s when it finally happens.

The lock on his Pandora’s box snaps, clattering as it hits the ground, and everything swims out. Every feeling he’s repressed, every thought he’s buried, *everything* floats to the surface until Dream can no longer crowd himself in denial’s shadow.

In short, this is Dream’s *oh* moment.

George’s lips are soft against his own and when Dream gets bold (greedy might be more suiting), he presses a bit harder. He can feel each ridge from George’s habit of biting his lips, can hear the small gasps of air George darts in, can sense George’s confusion from the way he remains stiff in

Dream's hold.

Dream tries to melt away the ice.

He pulls away briefly, ghosting his lips over George's, before sinking his teeth onto George's lower lip and tugging. George grows impatient with the way Dream teases him, their mouths close enough for him to feel Dream's smirk, but just barely touching. Dream's plan works and George dives in, clumsily molding their lips together again.

This time it's less shy and more feverish. George is a quick learner and Dream is an eager teacher; their kisses aim to bruise. Dream's hand moves down from George's cheek to his waist, dragging the smaller man closer until their chests are nearly flush against each other. George's fingers dance up Dream's arm and then curl around Dream's shoulder, giving it a gentle squeeze before continuing on to venture into the depths of Dream's hair.

These kisses are definitely more than George was asking for and more than either of them were anticipating, but as long as George isn't stopping him, Dream can't help but take. His grip on George's hip tightens and the way George's breath hitches is addictive. When George pulls away, Dream chases after his lips absentmindedly, but stops himself before he pushes his boundaries.

His eyes zero in on George's neck. The desire to teach George other forms of kisses is strong and Dream, in this moment, is a very weak-willed man.

"You were right," George mumbles after catching his breath. He removes his hand from Dream's hair with an impish tug. Dream mourns the loss of his touch.

"It's nothing special."

Dream watches silently as George flashes him a grin. His cheeks are pink from the warmth and weight of their actions, but other than that, he's the same. He's George. The one that brushes off serious situations with a carefree mindset, so long as nothing is at jeopardy from him doing so.

And nothing is. Because what Dream is feeling right now should be non-existent.

The bed squeaks when George leaves to clamber into his own. Dream can only stare at him idly and George raises an eyebrow when he catches his gaze. "This doesn't have to be weird, Dream,"

George mumbles with a chortle. “You’re just teaching me how to kiss. Like you taught me how to speedrun.”

Those are two very different things—they both know that—but it’s also the easiest reference for both of them to understand. This is where they stand. Two friends, despite the kiss they shared, despite the kisses they *will* share.

A draft blows in from under the door and George shivers.

Dream is left feeling numb.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, hello! University has started for me so there will be more of a wait between updates! I'll try to make it worthwhile though.

This chapter includes the CHUNK from the story's blurb, FINALLY. However, we are only beginning! The initial prompt was having them practice kissing and we are finally in that territory so the rest of the plot will follow.

I'm sorry that the buildup was so long.. even in this chapter alone.. please forgive me,,

Let me know what you think in the comments below if you have time! Thank you for reading. :)

P.S: As always, this is unedited (because I hate my works when I reread and would probably end up unpublishing everything + I have no friends

Puppet Strings and Tape

Chapter Summary

It's funny to Dream that there are five stages of grief.

Because if denial's the first and acceptance is the last, why is Dream stuck in this emotional limbo where he experiences both at once?

In other words, he's sure what he feels for George will pass, but at the same time, he's certain he'd be willing to try again in all the alternate universes they meet in.

Chapter Notes

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream is anything *but* numb.

A simple “good morning!” with a smile is enough to punch the air out of his lungs until he’s laying flat, defeated, on the bed with no motivation to move. Giddy and lost in the dazzling sparkles of George’s hazel eyes, but also confused and distraught with the burdensome feeling of having to bottle up his affection.

As any reasonable young adult would do, Dream fixes his problem by forcing himself to pay less and less attention to the details. He doesn’t need to know everything. He doesn’t need to know George sleeps on the left side of his bed, facedown, because then the sun reaches him slower in the morning. He doesn’t need to know George hates singing in public because he’s shy, but hums in the shower because he thinks nobody can hear him.

“Earth to Dream?”

Dream snaps his head up, no longer idly staring at the unlit fireplace. Karl is standing in front of him with a concerned frown on his face and to be more kind to the strain on Dream’s neck, he crouches a generous amount.

“The others wanna go on a drive, you down?” Karl bops his head to the side and Dream lets his eyes travel until they land on the front door. It’s slightly open and he can hear the laughter of the rest of his friends come from the other side.

It would be nice to go. Dream’s all about traveling, so seeing the scenery in North Carolina is appealing, and Karl’s back windows are tinted so he doesn’t have to worry about any accidental face reveals either.

George peeks his head in, calling for them, and Dream itches to follow like he’s somehow been *trained* to do. Instead, he looks up at Karl and stretches his arms lazily.

“Nah, I’m a little tired. You guys go on ahead though, don’t let me stop you.”

Karl gives him a thoughtful once over, the concern on his face never leaving, but to Dream’s relief, he doesn’t ask. He straightens his posture, offers half a smile that never reaches his eyes, and then jogs over to George. Dream hears hushed whispers before the door clicks shut and the lock turns.

If he’s being honest, he’s not sure what compelled him to say no. In general, it *had* been George, but he’s not sure *why* it had been George.

They haven’t kissed since that one time.

Dream doesn’t dwindle on George finding the experience bland because he wasn’t expecting anything different. George and him were best friends, there would never be anything more to that. So, although he’ll allow himself to admit that he’s upset, that’s not the reason why he turned down the road trip.

Dream wonders why they haven’t kissed again. Surely one time isn’t enough practice.

Their kisses had been innocent, touches of the lips and nothing more, but not every kiss was going to be framed like that and he’s certain George understands. So, why hadn’t he sought Dream out again? Did Dream’s guidance not suffice?

Something evil stains him from the inside when he thinks about George asking someone else for the same favor. Even if he imagines that person to be Sapnap, there’s a sour taste on the tip of his tongue.

He hears the doorbell ring and he freezes. Karl had pulled out of the driveway a few minutes ago; he was alone. He couldn't answer the door for a plethora of reasons—his face, first and foremost—so Dream tries to pay the ringing no heed and returns to his other, more intrusive thoughts.

Was George waiting for Dream to initiate?

That made no sense. They were doing this for George so naturally, they were doing things at *his* pace, not Dream's. Besides, he *did* initiate the last time. However, in order for him to even *consider* leaning in and kissing George senseless, he needed verbal confirmation and George hasn't spoken to him about the incident since.

Dream groans, leaning his head back until it lolls over the backrest. The ceiling is a blank canvas and Dream hates how easy it is for him to start painting his fantasies out on it.

"Lashes," he recalls and *God* were George's something to fear. Curled and long, just enough to kiss right above the tips of his cheekbones without seeming wicked long. Beautiful, but could bring a man to his knees if George were to stare up through them.

Dream raises a hand, finger tracing a lazy pattern in the air.

"Lips."

Plump, rosy overall, but darker shades of cherry every now and then from nervous nipping. There was also that white glow surrounding his teeth whenever George would bite his lip, one that would fade back to a rosy pink at the edges. Dream wonders if his fingers would have the same effect when digging down and prying those lips apart.

And the *warmth* that had filled Dream when they had kissed. It had been so inviting that he had to consciously remind himself not to push too far. His curiosity ails him. If he were to slip those aforementioned fingers in, rest them on George's tongue, would the warmth be too much to bear? If he were to explore that cavern with his tongue instead, eager to learn every inch, would George go slack in his touch? Would the heat consume both of them?

The doorbell rings again. Dream stares at the door momentarily and considers answering, but then shakes it off. It wouldn't be a good idea, he reminds himself.

“Hands,” he whispers, eyes tracing the outline of his own.

His are bigger, tan and decorated with prominent veins. George’s are slender, pale and perfect to color in bruises. The task would be so easy for Dream, but he’s not sure *how* easy. Would they redden at the slightest touch? Would playful pinches leave faint purple hues? Dream could probably taint both with one hand.

He sits up again, shaking his head and burying his face in his hands. It’s a futile attempt to erase the images in his head.

His phone rings mercifully and distracts him from his thoughts.

“Hello?” he grumbles into the mic, not bothering to check the contact name.

“Whoa,” Alex sounds taken aback, but he laughs directly after. “You okay, dude? You sound roughed up.”

“Fine, just tired,” Dream lies with too much practice. He plucks at the skin around his nails. “Why’re you calling?”

“We’re gonna get subways on the way back. Want anything? You’re on speaker by the way.”

“Sapnap knows my order.”

He hears shuffling and then Alex’s voice reaches him again. “This is true?”

“Of course! What kind of best friend would I be if I *didn’t* know?”

Alex says something, but Dream can barely hear it because the doorbell rings *again*.

“Karl,” Dream calls out and he hears his friend hum in response. “Someone keeps ringing the

fucking doorbell. How do I tell them to kindly piss off?”

“Tell George to handle it. He’s got the attitude for that.”

Lightning strikes almost ominously at the mention of his unrequited crush’s name and Dream feels an urge to lock himself in a closet.

“George?” He repeats in confusion, ignoring the second clap of thunder above him.

Dream hears the tires screech and Alex speedruns a list of curses. “What the *fuck* Karl?”

“Dream, dude,” Karl laughs in disbelief. “George said he was gonna stay with you.”

Dream hangs up the call at record speed and nearly slips dashing towards the door. When he swings it open, he’s greeted with a deathly stare and an icy ‘*Clay.*’

“I didn’t know that was you! I’ve got an identity to protect,” Dream defends weakly as he yanks George inside and out of the rain. The door closes and Dream snaps the lock shut before racing towards the bathroom. He plucks a towel off the stack on the shelves and then meets George in the hallway again.

“Why didn’t you call me?”

“I d-don’t have my s-sim card, idiot,” George hisses, grabbing the towel out of Dream’s hands and trying his best to dry off his hair. He can barely manage to do so, thanks to his shivering, so Dream takes the towel back and does it for him.

He tries his best not to dig too harshly into George’s scalp, but the worry makes it hard for him to do so. He works diligently, drying off the ends of George’s hair first before taking a jab at the roots, and George flinches every now and then. Whether it’s from the pressure or just from his bangs pricking his eyes, Dream isn’t sure; he softens his gestures nonetheless.

“Better?” He asks, brushing George’s fringe back so that his forehead is exposed. It makes it easier for Dream to look into George’s eyes this way, but Dream’s not sure if that’s a blessing or a curse.

Because while George's eyes are beautiful, Dream has a tendency to get lost in them.

George nods once, shifting his gaze away from Dream's and chewing on his lower lip. Dream sighs, satisfied with the response, and drapes the towel over the brunet's shoulders.

"You're gonna catch a cold, we need to get you a change of clothes," Dream mumbles, beckoning George to follow him into their shared bedroom. "Do you have anything warm?"

"No. I have sweats in the fourth drawer, that's it," George grunts, tugging the towel tighter around his lithe frame and practically disappearing underneath it. Dream sneaks in a glance when George isn't looking and he recoils at the way his heart sings.

"I'll lend you something," Dream shrugs, laying out the sweats on the bed before retrieving a clean hoodie from his side of the room. He tries to remain as nonchalant as possible when he puts it down next to George's clothes.

"Tell me when you're done," he says as he exits the room, closing the door behind him. It's only after he hears the soft thud of George's clothes hitting the floor that Dream realizes the consequences he'll have to face for his actions.

George. In his hoodie. In *Dream's* hoodie.

"Fuck," he whispers, faceplanting against the wooden door. George questions the noise, but Dream doesn't think of a coherent response and only emits a strangled noise of reassurance. (How convincing. Truly.)

"What's wrong with you, weirdo?" George snorts and Dream has half a second to collect himself so that he doesn't topple over when the door flies open.

"Tired," Dream's rehearsed lie slips off his tongue without hesitation. George doesn't bother sparing him a glance, walking right past Dream as if he doesn't exist.

"Lying voice."

Dream cringes, remembering that George is the one person he can't lie to. He doesn't know if he loves it or hates it.

He turns around, watching George shuffle down the hallway and then descend down the flight of stairs. The hoodie is too many sizes too big on George, but that's what makes it look *good*. Dream wouldn't mind giving him more clothes to borrow.

"You look nice," Dream says without thinking when he plops down next to George on the couch. George glances at him quickly before pushing himself up onto his feet again. His arms spread out and he turns to face Dream with a sheepish grin.

"It's way too big. It's bigger than that stupid extra large merch of yours I bought," George laughs, looking down at himself and rocking on his heels. Dream takes the chance to rake his eyes up and down George's figure adoringly.

The hem of the hoodie falls just below the middle of his thighs and the sleeves cause his hands to disappear fully. The hood pools on his shoulders and Dream is certain that half of George's face would be covered if he were to yank it over his head.

What's interesting to Dream is that George's sweats are also loose on him, confirming his suspicions that George does actually buy clothing in a size larger than necessary. A smile tugs onto Dream's lips without him realizing it.

George notices.

"Why're you smiling at me like that," George huffs under his breath, taking his seat next to Dream again. He reaches for the remote but Dream grabs it before him.

"Cause you're cute," Dream answers truthfully. He wiggles the remote in front of George's face and then raises it above their heads when the shorter man lunges for it again. "Football time."

"American football is boring," George rolls his eyes, but surrenders. He folds his arms over his chest and the ends of his sleeves bunch up because of the size. Dream shakes his head, laughing in endearment to himself.

In the middle of flipping through the channels, Dream realizes that Karl uses a different TV

network than him. Too lazy to find the sports channel, he settles for cartoon network, which is already playing (as expected), and puts down the remote on the other end of the couch, far from George. The brit is too occupied sneezing and unsurprisingly, Dream transforms into a worry wart.

“Still cold?” he asks, looking around the room for some sort of blanket. Nothing. He’s not sure how to control the temperature of the room and he doesn’t want to accidentally fuck something up, so finding the thermostat is out of question. “You should go lie in bed.”

“No,” George dismisses. He sneezes again and Dream gives him a reprimanding look. “I stayed home to hang out with you, Dream, so we are *going to hang*.”

Dream drags a palm down his face, knowing how stubborn George can get. “We can still hang out in your room. You’re such an idiot.”

“I like Adventure Time,” George replies, pretending to be focused on the show so that he can use it as his alibi. Dream sees right through him.

“Name two characters other than Finn.”

“Um.”

“Oh, come on now,” Dream groans, turning the TV off and standing in front of George expectantly. “Off to bed we go, Georgie.”

“I said *no*, Dream.” George places a hand on the armrest closest to him, gripping it as if it’ll save him from getting whisked away by Dream.

It doesn’t.

“Stop,” George protests when Dream leans over, arms winding around George’s waist without much of a struggle. The smaller man flails, giving the hardest shove he can manage at Dream’s chest and gaping when the blonde doesn’t budge. “What the fuck do you eat?”

Dream can’t help but chuckle at that, easing George off of the couch and onto his feet. “Do you

really wanna know?"

"Oh, shut up," George groans, taking a step back. His attempt to pull away only makes Dream draw him closer.

"Dance with me," Dream teases. One of his hands slips around to hook onto George's hip. This is all self-indulgent, really. "It'll help you warm up."

"I'm warm enough," George argues, but the sneeze that follows gives him away. Dream grins victoriously and his other hand latches onto George's adjacent one. Their fingers intertwine naturally and Dream can't stop himself from staring. He intends to memorize it, but George taps his foot impatiently.

"Put your left hand on my shoulder."

George does just that and steps in closer. At the proper height, it's easy for Dream to see just how much *bigger* he is in comparison to George. He could engulf George's entire hand with his own if he wanted to.

"Now what?" George's voice gently tugs Dream out of his thoughts.

He glances at George, inspecting his facial expression for any signs of discomfort, and thankfully comes up empty handed. George breaks the intense gaze, opting to look at the soft carpet they're standing on.

"Follow my lead," Dream whispers, so close that his breath causes George's bangs to move slightly.

He takes a step back with his right foot, George fills the gap in, and then he finishes the step with his left, which George has no problem copying. They repeat this twice before Dream persuades George to try starting it off and George immediately messes up, tripping and accidentally stepping on Dream's foot.

"Ow." It doesn't hurt, but teasing George comes like second nature to Dream. "That hurt!"

“I’m sorry!” George jolts back, almost bumping into Dream’s chin with the top of his head. He’s clearly flustered, frantically glancing back and forth between Dream’s face and the foot he just ‘injured’. “I- see, I’m no good at this.”

Dream uses the grip he has on George to pull him in close again, eliciting a surprised yelp from the latter. They stand there, chest to chest, and Dream temporarily forgets about the stress that’s been on his mind for days.

“George,” he doesn’t know why he says it. George looks up at him with doe eyes, inquiring wordlessly, and he’s so pretty. So *damn pretty* without knowing it. Dream grits his teeth, “Nevermind.”

“Okay,” George drawls out, clearly confused, and Dream pulls away.

He tries his best to be normal, but when George squeezes his hand reassuringly, Dream yanks his own back. It’s quick, as if he’s been burnt, and he has been—scorched by the flames of Hell themselves—but Dream accepts the pain.

George doesn’t say anything when Dream hurriedly leaves and Dream isn’t sure if he wants him to.

“Stream going up in five!” Karl shouts from down the hallway before he slams his bedroom door shut.

Everyone’s stationed at their own desks, except Alex who has snuck into Karl’s room. Something about surprising Karl and his chat with a sudden appearance.

Dream stares at his monitor, watching as Jackbox slowly boots up on Karl’s screen, until he hears a series of pings from the text channel. Sapnap is spamming the discord chat with the same photo of Rat that Bad had sent them this morning. It’s not funny, but Dream finds himself laughing anyway. Their humor is simplistic and parallels those of children, literal children.

“Boys!” Sapnap yells into the mic. Dream has his headphones looped around his neck, so he hears Sapnap’s voice through discord and from down the hall. It’s noisy, but he’s used to it.

“Sapnap!” He yells back after adjusting his equipment so that he’s ready for Karl’s stream. A shadow casts over his monitor for a passing second and through his peripheral vision, he can see George sitting himself down at his own desk.

Karl’s mic lights up, “Ready? You guys have about 3 minutes since I’m playing Corpse’s new song first.”

“All good,” George whispers into his own mic. Dream spares him a glance and sees George rub his temples, either from stress or sleepiness. “Where’s Quackity?”

George’s question goes unheard because Karl deafens his mic and a few seconds later, Dream’s phone lights up with the notification that Karl’s channel is live. He pulls up the stream on his second monitor and chuckles to himself at the stark contrast between Karl’s and Corpse’s voices when the former sings along.

“He sounds like a rat,” George teases and Dream snorts. It’s so like him. “No offense to *the* Rat of course.”

“Don’t talk about my fiancé like that,” Sapnap scolds lightly. If they had been on Minecraft, Dream would already be in the middle of a war. Thankfully, they aren’t, so all Sapnap can do is move George to a different voice channel, but George joins back instantly.

The music stops and Dream instinctively glances at Karl’s stream. He manages to look at the exact second Alex jumps out of the closet with a loaded nerf gun aimed right at Karl’s face. Karl falls out of his chair and Dream doesn’t need to check Twitter to know that it’s already trending. After a few seconds of light-hearted banter, Alex pulls up a chair next to Karl’s and Dream hears Karl undeafen.

Show’s on. He mutes Karl’s stream and greets the chat with an overenthusiastic hi.

“A bit much,” Sapnap teases. Dream tells him to shut up, but nothing more.

“Starting it off with some good ol’ Quiplash,” Karl announces and Dream can’t help but groan in

misery.

Quiplash is the worst game in all of the Jackbox series and Dream will stand by that. It's Pander City and Dream is willing to drive right past it. George shares his sentiments and Dream discerns a light, sympathetic pat on the back from his best friend, but that's all.

"This is Dream's favorite," Alex jokes and Dream's about to refute it when two loud dings go off.

First he hears Bad, who scolds Sapnap for his actions from earlier, and then he hears a posh British accent laced with drowsiness, which belongs to no other than Wilbur.

"Isn't it past your bedtime?" Sapnap asks Wilbur while the instructions to the game are being read aloud. They've all played this game too many times to need it.

"*Isn't it past your bedtime?*" Wilbur repeats in a poor American accent to which Alex goes 'LMFAO' out loud. "Sorry, do I sound tired? I just got finished doing your mother."

"Dude!"

Dream wheezes, tossing his head back and nearly slipping out of his chair in the process. Laughing this hard at his best friend's defeat should definitely be breaking a bro code of some sort, but he could care less right now.

"Was it *that* funny, Dream?" George scoffs and Dream looks at him, wiping the tears that have formed at the corners of his eyes. "Oh my god, Dream. *Breathe.*"

"You tell 'em, Gogmister," Karl says and then with that same breath, "Stop looking at my answers!"

Dream flinches when Alex's loud laughter filters in through his headset and then he shakes his head with a soft smile as he types out his own answers. He can hear them bicker in the background and it almost distracts him from submitting his answers on time.

"You're cheating!"

“Any askers? I see none?”

“Hey!” Bad yells, causing Alex and Karl to quiet down. “No fighting. We’re all friends here.”

Before Alex can come up with a witty response, the first prompt flashes on the screen. Needless to say, he’s the one to read it out loud because nobody else cares to.

“What is the worst thing to say at a funeral?” From the corner of Dream’s eye, he sees Alex rub his hands evilly on Karl’s stream, clearly too excited for the answers that are about to appear.

“This is so boring, I thought it was supposed to be a FUNeral,” Alex snorts. *“Versus I hope this doesn’t awaken anything in me. What the fuck?”*

“Language!”

“Who wrote these?” Alex is doubling over in laughter, almost in hysterics. Dream finds it funnier that beside Alex, Karl is as frozen as ice with only an awkward smile on his face because anything more could lead to a cancel thread on Twitter.

The right one wins, much to Karl’s dismay and Wilbur’s glory, and it’s all because of the audience. Nobody is daring enough to risk their career on the line by voting for the second and only Alex and George dare to vote for the first.

“The easiest way to become famous is,” Alex reads aloud and Dream emits a loud sigh, already knowing where this is going to go.

“Cheat —oh my god— on a children’s video game or Tweet #DNF. Okay the second one is such a pander!”

Out of spite, Dream votes the second option. He doesn’t have the courage to look at George when the results pop up; that is until he realizes that George’s answer is on the right. “George? What’s wrong with you?”

“You voted for it!” George shoots right back at him without hesitation and his laughter echoes.
“Caught in 4k. Everyone spam my 4k emote.”

“Worst thing to name your child.”

Rat versus *George*. Dream gets George back by voting for his name and George reaches over, punching Dream on the shoulder for it.

“What the fuck?” He splutters, ignoring Bad when he reprimands him. George shoots him a dirty look and while it’s meant to be menacing, Dream thinks he looks more like an angry kitten than anything else.

Speaking of kittens, George is still wearing his hoodie and his sweater paws make him look a lot smaller than he is. Dream’s stare lingers long enough for him to miss the next two rounds and he only remembers he’s playing a game when Alex and Sapnap put him on blast for not voting. If George knows the reason behind Dream’s temporary absence, he says nothing of it.

“I can’t believe Bad is in the lead. I’m taking that spot next round,” Karl challenges. Dream wants to jump in, the Leo in him aches, but he stays silent because he’s second to last. Quiplash is not his forte and it never will be. His jokes are too *good* for everyone to get because they’re *dumb* and only farm votes through memes.

“Any asks?” Bad replies easily, apologizing immediately after as if it’ll take away the damage that’s been done. Dream watches as Karl dramatically falls out of his chair again. Alex widens his eyes comically and then moves so that he’s in the center of the screen, only to be pushed out of the way once Karl gets back onto his feet.

“My prompts suck,” Dream complains into his mic and Wilbur hums in agreement. “We should play monster seeking monster.”

Karl gets a little too excited when Dream mentions his favorite game, but everyone else shuts him down the second after, saying that it didn’t fit the vibe of the stream. In other words, they didn’t like the game, but they needed kinder words so that they wouldn’t have to say it so bluntly. George accuses Dream of simply wanting to flirt with the audience and Dream doesn’t deny, knowing their fans will get a kick out of it. It’s funny to see them simp over the littlest of things.

Ironical, really.

Dream knows he's being a hypocrite. He knows because his heart is the loudest thing in the room right now and all he's doing is watching George giggle to himself over the answers he's typing on his phone.

"Oo, Dream got a safety quip," Sapnap announces and Dream gently hits his fist against the desk, knowing that he's messed up this time. He doesn't care as much as usual though, not when George is finding this entertaining enough to nudge Dream on the arm with his elbow and mouth 'loser' as if it's a secret that he can't share on stream.

"Oh no, they're making a live action movie of... *The Dream SMP* or *Heat Waves*. This isn't funny. You guys have to be funnier than this." Alex stares into the camera, giving the most unimpressed look he can manage. The rest of them know him well enough to tell that he's bluffing; one of these answers belongs to him.

"I know right," Wilbur butts in with a low chuckle. "Who would write such a thing?"

Wilbur loses that round to Alex, despite everyone on the call voting for his answer. The audience is too predictable and Dream rolls his eyes when Alex hollers in triumph.

"Let's fucking go! Chat, thank you, you are so easy. I was not lying when I said dreamnotfound was the easiest way to win jackbox."

Dream remembers the stream Alex is referencing. He hadn't played on it, but he had watched Sapnap and Sapnap had given him the cheekiest of grins when Alex had said that phrase the first time. He's sure that Sapnap's bearing the same exact expression on his face right now.

By the end of the second round, the counter for DNF jokes had hit five and as much as Dream wants to entertain the crowd, he isn't up for more of them.

So, when the last round roles in and Sapnap's answers to "A better love story than *Twilight*" are just three variations of dreamnotfound, Dream lies for the umpteenth time that day by saying he's tired.

George catches him again—of course he does—but he doesn't say anything.

“Already? It’s not even that late,” Bad whines, trying to convince Dream to stay longer.

Alex begs him to play Madverse City at the least, but Dream declines. “So you guys can pander some more? No thanks.”

Dream knows he sounds a lot harsher than usual and he’s definitely gonna get a dozen messages asking him about his tone later, but for now, all of them know not to push. Karl lets him off the hook, already texting a few of his other friends to fill in, and Dream bids chat his goodbyes before hanging up the call.

“Ranboo?” He hears George say as he climbs into bed. He tries his best not to make too much noise, aware that George’s mic was still on and if their fans were able to put two and two together, they’d never be able to live things down. “Oh? Corpse too, wow.”

Dream perks up at that, carefully tossing one of his pillows at the back of George’s head. George’s fingers hit a hotkey on the keyboard, which Dream assumes is to mute the mic, because George then takes off his headset and turns to face him.

“What?”

“I wanna hear.”

“Join on your own phone then,” George says, turning his chair back around to focus on the stream. Dream emits an obnoxiously loud whine before George can put his headphones on again. “Oh my god, *fine*. You big baby.”

Carefully, George places his headphones on his desk and then turns them off. It takes a second for his computer to recognize the change in output devices.

“You’re gonna get destroyed.” Wilbur sounds tired, his voice is an octave lower than usual. Dream is surprised voices can sound that deep.

Ranboo denies Wilbur’s claims and Corpse chuckles at the dramatics. Dream suddenly feels very self-conscious. He’s never cared about how he sounds until now. Hearing the triangle of deep voice makes him feel like his pride is being threatened.

It doesn't help that George is giggling to everything coming out of Corpse's mouth either.

(He does that everytime Corpse is in the lobby, Dream swears it.)

"George, you're gonna like this one," Corpse says into the mic and Dream frowns when he sees George press the side of his face into his palm.

"I'm gonna like it?" George repeats. Dream doesn't need to see his face to know he's blushing (that's the worst part). "How are you so sure about that?"

"You'll see, baby."

Baby?

To be fair, it's Corpse's signature word. However, Dream doesn't feel any less weirded out by hearing that directed towards George.

"Oh my god," George laughs softly, covering his face with his hands fully now—or rather, the sleeves of Dream's hoodie. Dream should be enjoying the sight, but he's too focused on, well:

Why doesn't George react like that when *he* calls him *baby*?

He's so lost in his thoughts that he misses the first half of Corpse's rap, only tuning in for the last two lines.

"I'm world class, you're just a *mate*. *I wanna be more though, let me take you on a date.*"

Dream stares daggers into George's monitor, as if they'll somehow reach Corpse who's across the country. Corpse is a great guy, don't get Dream wrong, but was that verse necessary? Was it *really*?

“*Corpse*,” is George’s response. He says it in a way Dream has only ever heard him say *his* name before. Exasperated, flustered, on the brink of leaving the call from (welcomed) embarrassment.

Dream sends another pillow at George’s head and is pleased when George mutes his mic to give him another annoyed “*What?*”

“Tone it down Captain Obvious,” Dream snorts. “I can feel you blushing from here.”

He expects a snarky reply, but only gets a curt “*whatever*”. That doesn’t sit right with him, but it *has to*, so Dream stays quiet when George begins his own rap.

Corpse wins by a landslide, as expected, and his victory speech for the round is concise. “So, about that date?”

“I’m going to sleep,” Dream says without thinking. He can see George panic, struggling to mute his mic because he’s caught off guard, and by the spam of *let me in please* emotes in Karl’s chat, he can tell that everyone has caught onto them. That’s a problem for another time though. “G’night.”

“It’s nine, Dream.”

“And?”

“And,” George sighs, disconnecting from the discord himself after sending out a few messages. “You never sleep this early.”

“That’s not true. I’ve slept this early—,” there’s a hesitant pause, “probably once before.”

George rolls his eyes at Dream’s weak ending and then hurls Dream’s pillows back at him with all of the strength he can manage. They flop pathetically at Dream’s sides instead of his face, which George was most likely aiming at.

“Spit it out,” George says, making his way into Dream’s bed without even thinking to ask for permission. Not that Dream would deny him anyway. “You’ve been acting weird again, so spit it

out.”

“Spit what out?”

“Whatever’s going on in that dense head of yours.”

“I,” Dream starts, closing his mouth so George can feel the full effect of his frown. “My head is not dense.”

The corners of George’s eyes crinkle when he smiles, “You’re not acting the part.”

Dream can only shake his head in response, trying to hint at a change of topic. George doesn’t get it. No, he definitely does, but he chooses to ignore it. Dream’s backed up against the wall with this one.

“Is this because we kissed?” *Yes.* “I won’t tell anyone.” *That’s not the problem.* “It can just be a one time thing. We can forget about it.” *I’ve tried and I can’t.* “I’m sorry for asking, really.”

“Don’t be,” Dream sighs, staring at the ceiling above them and imagining what it would look like with glow-in-the-dark stars littered across it. “I’m glad you asked me.”

That came out wrong.

“Huh?”

Dream squeezes his eyes shut, “I mean it like—I’m happy you trust me enough to ask me.”

And then, very quietly, “Did you ask anyone else?”

“No,” George scoffs, pulling the covers up until they reach his chin. Dream doesn’t know how the heat isn’t suffocating him, given that the windows aren’t open and George is still in his oversized hoodie. “It’s scary to ask. I don’t want to be laughed at for it.”

The reassurance allows Dream to breathe easier. Of course it's not in his place to be upset if George is kissing other people, but that's easier said than done.

"I'd never laugh at you."

"You definitely would," George counters without hesitation and Dream only smiles because he knows George is right. "But I knew you'd keep it a secret. That was the whole reason I asked you."

They're not close enough to hear each other's breathing, but Dream can still feel the warmth radiating off of George. Occasionally, George will shift around to get more comfortable and Dream will dart in a sharp breath whenever their arms or legs brush against each other.

"I can't believe I'll have to tell my future wife that my first kiss went to you."

Dream grimaces at the mention of the future. It's something he's always dreaded. Sure, he has youtube to sustain him for now, but what happens when people get bored of his content? What happens when they replace him? Forget him?

Will his friends still be there in a few years? When's the last time they'll log onto his servers? Will they leave him for other people?

Then there's also the mention of George's future *wife*. A clear indication that no matter how many timelines Dream could waste time picturing, none of them would give him George. In George's mind, they weren't meant to be together.

Dream's a debater, but this argument is a lost case.

However, it does please him that George says "you" instead of something more vague like 'friend'. It means that whoever George ends up with will know about *him* specifically. He won't be just another face from George's past.

"Me as in Dream or Clay?" He asks, rolling over so that he's lying on his side and facing George.

George turns his head to stare at Dream before rolling onto his side as well. “Both, I would hope.”

“Both?”

“Yeah, the famous content creator, Dream, but also my best friend, Clay.”

“Oh,” Dream says quietly. It’s not that amazing of a response, he knows this, but he doesn’t have more to say. Knowing George plans to keep him in his life for that long leaves him speechless.

“Dream, if you have no problem with it, why haven’t you kissed me again?”

It takes all of Dream’s sanity to remind himself that George is asking this platonically, that their kisses are only lessons, that George is using him as practice. Later, George would be kissing someone else—someone he likes, someone he *loves*, someone other than Dream—and Dream would have to be okay with that.

“I didn’t know you wanted me to.”

“I literally asked you,” George mumbles and the bed squeaks when he scoots over. Dream wishes he weren’t so close because surely George could hear the loud, rhythmic beating of his heart now.

“I need permission, George, I can’t just lean in and kiss you out of nowhere.”

“Well, I’m giving you permission. Whenever and wherever, so long as we’re out of sight.”

“Why don’t *you* initiate it?”

“You’re the one teaching me! I’m bad at this! I don’t know how to initiate, I- Dream?” George freezes under his touch when Dream places a hand on his cheek, his thumb brushing over George’s prominent cheekbone.

“They like when you grab their face. Gently like this,” Dream mumbles and then slowly, he moves his thumb to the other cheek and begins to apply pressure to both sides of George’s face. “Or a

little rougher, depending on the person.”

His eyes are half-lidded, so he almost misses the way George flinches at his grip. Almost. He loosens up and then pulls his hand back a slight bit, just enough so that his pointer and middle fingers are all that remain on the underside of George’s chin.

“Lean in,” Dream mutters, pushing himself closer to George. The blanket pools up underneath their arms uncomfortably but Dream pays it no mind and tips George’s head up. “Get them to face you.”

“Because sometimes,” Dream whispers, angling his head to negate all attempts George has made at avoiding his intense gaze. “They get shy.”

The confidence is a facade. Dream refuses to speak louder than just above a whisper, not because he’s trying to be attractive, but because he doesn’t trust his voice. It wavers when he’s nervous and George *always* makes him nervous. Dream also thanks the darkness of the night for hiding the color that’s—without a doubt—staining his face and the tips of his ears.

After a few more seconds of silent staring, Dream finally seals their lips together.

It’s better than the last time. It’s better because now Dream has a better grasp of what’s happening and he’s aware of where his hands are. One of them rests atop the soft curve of George’s waist, fingers digging just enough to keep the man pinned against him without causing bruises, and the other is lost in soft, brunet locks. With the latter, Dream delivers a light tug to George’s hair and the noise it elicits fuels Dream’s hunger.

They part for air quickly because of George’s inexperience, but Dream takes this chance to tighten his grip on the smaller man’s hair again. George gasps, fluttering his eyes shut out of embarrassment, but Dream doesn’t tease him for it. Instead, he tips George’s head back and brings his lips to his ear.

“Take note of the things they like,” Dream murmurs. Right now, he’s daring enough to nip at the tip of George’s ear, but later, he knows he’ll wallow in regret. Thankfully, George doesn’t seem to mind.

He lets go of George’s hair, waiting until he sees dilated hazel irises staring back at him to continue. When he does, his right hand is cupping George’s jaw again and his thumb is venturing. It hovers over George’s jawline before landing on the center of his lips.

“Part them,” Dream orders, but George is too dazed and confused to comply, so Dream does it for him. His thumb presses onto George’s bottom lip, dragging it out until rows of teeth peek from behind it. “Normally, you’d do that with your tongue, but I don’t want to scare you.”

Dream knocks his forehead gently against George’s, wanting to be selfish for a second longer and keep him close, when George speaks and cuts through the heavy silence.

“Scare me.”

His words are so soft, they tickle the pad of Dream’s thumb. Dream doesn’t know what to make of their situation at first, but then he reintroduces his hand to George’s hair, dives down, and slots their lips together. The angle makes the tips of their noses bump and George drowns a giggle into the kiss. When his laughter dies down, Dream decides to push his luck and carefully bites down on George’s swollen bottom lip.

George freezes and Dream can’t help but smile, knowing he’s caught George off guard. It’s ridiculous, considering Dream *had* technically warned him, but the idea of making out must be very foreign to him so Dream cuts him some slack. Nonetheless, after a few more seconds of slow kissing, George parts his lips tentatively and Dream wastes no time in devouring him.

It’s oddly specific, but George tastes like chocolate strawberries, milk chocolate strawberries to be exact, and Dream finds it funny because that was his favorite snack growing up. Then, Dream realizes that if he thinks hard enough, George also tastes like the waffles his mom used to make him when he was younger, topped with too much syrup and too little whipped cream. In short, George tastes like everything Dream likes and to be fair, it’s not surprising.

It is, however, intoxicating and Dream prods deeper with his tongue while George’s stirs underneath his, eager but unsure. Dream teases him with ghostly touches and that coaxes George into curling his tongue upwards and sliding it over Dream’s. When George gets a tad bit *too* comfortable with leading, Dream uses the hand at George’s side to flick at the older man’s hip and they part carefully.

“Don’t get so greedy,” Dream mumbles, lips moving lazily against George’s. George only smiles at him, lower lip pushed out into a tempting pout, and Dream pulls away before things get too messy.

There’s a faint knock at their door and Dream sees fear flicker in George’s eyes, probably

mirroring the look in his own, before they race to untangle their limbs. Sapnap peeks his head in right as they manage to put a reasonable distance between them.

“Uh,” Sapnap starts oh-so intellectually, squinting as he tries to take in the sight before him. “Karl’s wondering if you’re rejoining the stream, George. If not, he’s gonna add Techno.”

George is hiding under the covers as if it’ll make him disappear, so Dream answers on his behalf. “No, I think he’s done for the night. He said he was tired.”

“Tired,” Sapnap repeats, sounding everything *but* convinced. Dream flashes him a smile, all teeth; then he remembers that he looks more maniacal than natural this way and presses his lips together. “Alright, sleep well I guess.”

The door closes shut behind Sapnap and Dream releases a breath he didn’t know he was holding in, as cliché as it sounds. Next to him, George finally peeks his head out of the covers, glancing around the room cautiously for any intruders, before sitting up straight. Dream blinks at him, startled by his sudden movement, and nearly whines when George leaves his bed for the comfort of his own.

“That would’ve been bad,” George laughs, slipping under his own covers this time and turning his head to flash Dream a boyish grin. “He probably thinks we’re secretly dating or something at this point.”

“Would that be so bad?” Dream finds himself asking without a second thought. He slaps his forehead with his palm the second the words leave his mouth and George chortles at the loud smack that echoes in the room.

“What did you say? I didn’t catch that,” George mutters after yawning quietly. Dream’s not sure what supernatural being is helping him narrowly dodge all these bullets, but he’s thankful for them. “Can you turn the light off, by the way? I’m too comfy to move.”

“What?” Dream asks, sounding mildly irritated, despite already sitting up and peeling his blanket off his body. “Why didn’t you do that when you were walking to your own bed?”

“Forgot.”

“You’re unbelievable,” Dream states firmly, dragging himself towards the switch by the door and

flicking it off. When he turns around, George is looking up at him with the corners of his lips curled up smugly and Dream scowls. “Whatever you’re thinking about saying, keep it to yourself.”

“I wasn’t gonna say anything,” George denies and his thumbs fiddle with the ends of his—Dream’s—sweater. He’s cozily tucked in bed with only his arms laid over his blanket, looking way younger than he actually is.

Dream walks over, staring down at George with an unamused countenance. George flinches when Dream leans down and it’s that small spark of power that Dream thrives off of. Before he can talk some sense into himself, Dream leaves a kiss on George’s forehead. It’s soft and sweet and way too vulnerable for Dream to play off without an explanation.

“Goodnight kisses,” Dream says, leaning back so that he can speak without sounding muffled. “Short and simple, but people love them.”

He runs a hand through his hair and then moves to stand up, but George places a hand on Dream’s chest, fingers curling into his shirt and dragging him in close. Dream’s breath hitches when George’s lips meet his own.

“Goodnight,” George whispers after he pulls away. “Like that?”

It’s chaste and Dream can tell that George wasn’t putting much feeling into it. (Or maybe he was, but it still pales in comparison to what Dream had done.)

“Yeah,” Dream nods, swallowing the thick lump in his throat when George giggles, all pleased with his ‘handiwork’.

“Just like that.”

Chapter End Notes

University is kicking my ass!

Anyway, how are you all doing? I hope these past few weeks have been treating you well!

I know people have been wondering about George's perspective to all of this, but I feel

like dragging out Dream's side is much better for the plot. I'll definitely consider adding in a chapter later where we get a peek into George's head, but for now, I hope you can trust in the process! I swear we'll learn more about George's thoughts soon, even if it's not through a full blown update in his pov!

As always, comments are welcome and appreciated!

I try my best to reply to everything, but I'm really sorry that I take ages to reply sometimes. I'm usually very occupied with school so I post and then skedaddle until I'm ready for another upload.

You guys have been very, very, very kind to me so far! Thank you so much for reading and sticking around!

Behind Those White Gates

Chapter Summary

All the Gods on Olympus, with their strengths combined, could not amount to the power which George so effortlessly holds.

Dream would argue that even if he were to suffer an eternity for it.

Chapter Notes

WARNING: NSFW implications throughout the end! I apologize. :')

This isn't that bad.. I hope.

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's insane how confident George gets overnight. Dream says that fondly, of course, but it truly is insane.

George goes from meekly following Dream's lead to dragging Dream down out of nowhere. At this rate, Dream's certain that they've kissed in every secluded corner in Karl's house and when this house of cards comes crashing down, Dream will never be able to look at any inch of this building the same again. It's a nice place, really, but all he can think about is George pressing him against the wall—any and all walls—and pulling him down so that their eager lips can meet.

To be honest, his ego is a little bruised. Normally, he has the control in these kinds of situations, but lately he's just been letting George guide him as if he's a blind man. Now on one hand, it could be because he's head over heels for the Brit, but on the other hand, he's also too scared to be as daring as George. Not only is there the risk of being caught, but there's also the risk of accidentally doing too much.

Dream would rather share a grave with the devil himself than accidentally push farther than George wants him to. Sure, George had given him permission to kiss him “whenever and wherever”, but Dream wants to be careful. Especially because he doesn't know what he'd do with that much power and if he'd be able to even stop.

(As in he might accidentally jeopardize their friendship; not anything more than that. He would never take too much without verbal consent.)

It's clear that George is getting impatient with him. Everytime they share a kiss, George tries to get him to do more, to give more. Dream knows George is eager to learn, but teaching someone how to kiss is much harder than Dream had anticipated. They've already learned how to make out and while practice is always useful, what *more* could George possibly want to learn?

Surely.. surely he's not asking Dream to teach him how to..

"Dream!"

Dream snaps out of his thoughts and takes in his surroundings. They're in the backyard, having a little barbecue session. He's on the blanket, spread out and staring at the clouds above, with Sapnap sitting up right next to him. Together, they've been listening to Alex and George bicker over how to work the grill while Karl does the actual cooking. Somewhere along the lines, Dream seems to have drifted off.

"Sorry, what?" He asks, turning his head to meet Sapnap's annoyed gaze. His sheepish smile earns him a flick on the thigh.

"I asked if the sun is bothering you. I can get you a pair of shades," Sapnap mumbles, stretching his arms out and then pushing himself up onto his feet only for George to steal his seat right after.

"He's fine!" George chirps happily and Dream raises an eyebrow at him.

"I'm sorry, I didn't know you changed your name to Dream," Sapnap snorts. George shrugs, taking no offense to the clear sarcasm. "Whatever, I'm gonna get some more water bottles."

"Get me a can of pepsi!" Dream shouts and Sapnap waves to let him know he heard him.

"So," the blonde says, moving his eyes away from Sapnap's retreating figure and instead focusing on George who is basking in the sunlight right next to him. "Finally lost the argument to Alex?"

“I didn’t lose,” George scoffs and then shrugs his cardigan off. Dream isn’t sure why he’s wearing one, but then he remembers that George isn’t used to the heat and probably doesn’t know how to dress up properly for it either.

Dream freezes when he feels George lay down next to him. He becomes extremely self-aware of his own body, wondering if there’s sweat that’s collected on his arm and dreading how George would react if there was. However, George doesn’t flinch away in disgust so Dream takes that as a good sign.

“The sun needs to get a job,” George groans, holding his cardigan up so that both of them get some shade for their faces. Dream helps him by grabbing onto one end, twitching when the hem of the cardigan tickles his neck.

“This *is* its job, George,” Dream chuckles, turning his head to look at the man beside him. He gets a scowl in response. “Very mature.”

“That’s rich coming from you.”

A much needed breeze blows past them through the material of George’s cardigan. Dream considers dropping it, but doesn’t have the heart to upon seeing that George seems very content at the moment.

There’s a loud bang that sounds from a few feet in front of them, but the cloth hinders his sight. Karl and Alex end up in a lighthearted argument (again) and a few minutes later, Dream hears Sapnap’s loud sigh. A clatter of metal follows and Dream guesses that Sapnap is taking over the grill while the other two continue their banter. Next to Dream, George is giggling.

“Hey,” George says when he catches Dream’s stare.

“Hi.” It’s moments like this that makes Dream feel as if he’s in some cliché teen romcom.

Too busy imagining them (mostly George) in a movie, Dream fails to immediately notice the mischievous glint in George’s eyes like he normally would. He only catches it the second before George’s eyelids snap shut and his soft lips meet Dream’s.

Dream panics.

The hand he has on the cardigan begins to shake lightly, as if he's unsure what to do with it. As much as he's yearning to reach out and hold George like he normally does, he can't. The others will see them if he does.

George is merciless. The kiss starts off light and sweet, but George grows confident way too quickly. His teeth tease at Dream's lower lip before delivering a light tug, hinting that he wants Dream to do something.

Dream thinks George has too much faith in a flimsy piece of cloth.

Before Dream can even close his eyes, let alone respond to the kiss, he hears the grass crunching underneath someone's shoes. George pulls away and the cardigan drops.

"Here's your pepsi," Sapnap mumbles, sitting down next to George and then splaying his upper torso over both of his best friends. Dream grunts upon the sudden extra weight he's carrying after being used as a make-shift couch, but Sapnap has no remorse. "You guys are too bony, but it'll do."

"Sapnap, move," George complains, trying to push the youngest off of them with the one arm that's free. "It's hot, get off!"

"I bet it is," Sapnap snickers and Dream shakes his head at the joke, trying his best not to laugh and failing miserably. "You were literally just cuddling with Dream, George. Give me some love too."

"We weren't cuddling," Dream protests, but it falls on deaf ears. Sapnap is too busy trying to smooch George and George is shrieking in pain and agony.

"To be fair, Dream could probably push me off if he wanted to," Sapnap says nonchalantly, turning his head to look up at the tall male. "Unlike you, he just loves me too much."

Dream gives him a look and Sapnap grins cheekily, only to yelp when Dream finally raises his arms and shoves the younger man away.

“Yes!” George shouts as if he were the one that got them out of the situation. “He loves me *more!*”

“To a fault, actually,” Dream mutters, but once again, both of his friends are too busy with one another to hear him. Sapnap is tackling George down and George is a mess of whines and giggles.

Dream parts his lips with the urge to say something, to tell Sapnap to *get off of George*, but he shuts them once he realizes it’s not his place to do that. How would he even explain such a thing?

“Hotdogs are ready! Wings coming up soon,” Karl announces. Sapnap and George race over to him, joining Alex who is already devouring his snack, but Dream sits still.

He turns the can of pepsi around in his hand, staring straight ahead at nothing in particular. It’s cold and serves as a temporary distraction from his thoughts as well as a remedy for the heat licking at the pit of his stomach.

“Dream, if you don’t eat this I will,” Alex promises. Dream knows he’s bluffing—Alex is only saying that so that Dream will finally eat something—but he stands up anyway and begins to make his way over.

Dream’s eyes betray him by shifting a little to the right where George is silently munching on his meal. He pauses for a split second when he notices that the brunette is already staring at him. Luckily, the other boys are too occupied to notice his brief moment of panic and Dream continues walking.

When he reaches the table, George slides his plate over to him with a knowing smirk.

“You’re,” Dream begins and then flails his hands in exasperation. “You’re too risky! What *was* that, George? They were right there! They could’ve seen!”

“Calm down, Dream,” George replies with ease. They’re in their room, winding down a bit before they join the others for dinner. “People make kissing out to be this big deal, but it’s not. I just

wanted to see if I could find *some* sort of thrill in it.”

“Well, *of course* it’s not a big deal!” Dream cries out, flopping onto his bed and yanking his pillow over his face. “I told you it’s only nice when it’s with someone special.” He can feel a rant coming. “We’re just friends. It’ll never feel that way! So stop being so reckless!”

“Whoa, what? Why are you so worked up over this?”

“Because *you* said you didn’t want them finding out! I’m respecting that,” Dream explains, speaking a little louder so that the pillow doesn’t muffle his words.

“Yeah, but if we get caught because of me, I won’t pin it on you obviously,” George mumbles, clearly confused as to why Dream is throwing a tantrum.

Dream knows he’s being unreasonable, but he can’t help it. He’s not good at handling his emotions; he’s *never* been. He tears the pillow away and then sits up, whipping around to face George who has awkwardly closed in on himself.

“Have you cared about what *I* think, George? Maybe I don’t want people seeing me *tongue fucking* my best friend’s throat!”

He regrets the words as soon as they leave him, slapping a hand over his mouth and groaning in guilt. George slouches in defeat, but Dream feels like he’s the one that has lost.

“George, I didn’t mean it like that,” he begins, running a hand through his hair. “I was just stressed and-”

“I said we didn’t have to do this if you didn’t want to,” George says quietly, staring at the wooden floorboard underneath him. “I said it, Dream.”

“I know, I’m sorry, it’s not like that.”

“Then what is it like?” George asks, punching out what sounds like a mixture of a laugh and a scoff. “I didn’t force you to do this.”

“George-”

“You could've just told me!” George shouts, finally glancing up at Dream with a furious glare. Dream's lips part when he sees the unshed tears that have collected on George's lower lash line. “You could've told me you didn't want to do it and I would've respected that.”

There's a beat of silence and George reaches up to harshly wipe at his eyes with the sleeve of his cardigan. Dream tries to stand up and makes his way to George but George takes a step back.

“Don't you fucking dare get close to me.”

Dream freezes in place, hands dropping to his sides and heart sinking to his stomach.

“I didn't ask for your pity. I asked for your *help* because you're my friend, but you could've said no. I would've figured it out by myself. I'm *not* your problem to solve.”

Everything is so, so twisted.

“Sorry that kissing me is so humiliating! Really. I'm truly sorry. God forbid they find out you kissed me!”

“That's not it,” Dream tries again but George raises a hand to silence him.

“I won't embarrass you any further,” George says, voice scarily steady for someone who has tear stains on the corners of their eyes. “You're free, Clay. You're free of me.”

Dream hears the door slam shut behind George, but he doesn't have the energy to chase after him. He should, but he can't. He's still processing everything that's just happened.

Where did it go so wrong?

He shouldn't have said what he did. He knew it would come out wrong and he *still* said it because of his impulses—because of the fear that George would realize he was only scared people would find out because then he'd have to explain why he said “yes” to the circumstances in the first place. He didn't want George to know he was enjoying their shared kisses, secretive or not. Worst of all, he didn't want to keep projecting onto George, reading more into the latter's actions for no reason; very briefly, he'd tricked himself into thinking George had taken that risk because he wanted him.

There were so many other things he could've said, but again, he's never been good at handling his emotions.

“Fuck,” he sighs, pressing his palms against his face and slouching against the wall. “Fuck, fuck, fuck.”

You're free, Clay. You're free of me.

No, Dream isn't. He's anything but free. He's chained and there's no key for the lock that holds him still. This is wrong. He shouldn't be falling for his best friend, he shouldn't be using George's desire to learn kissing to satisfy his own urges, he shouldn't be welcoming these sinful thoughts of delving past what George is giving him.

So then why does it feel so right?

Why do his fingers slot so perfectly between the gaps of George's? Why does the curve of his palm match the dip of George's waist as if they were molded from the same clay?

And *God* tell him why their kisses—from the start, from when he took George's first, from when George was sloppy and uncoordinated—made him feel like there would be nothing better that life would have to offer?

“The fuck did you do?”

Dream jolts, staring at Alex who has barged in the room. There's no malice to his voice, just concern. Karl steps in quietly after him and shuts the door. The pair stand there, waiting for Dream to say something, but Dream doesn't know what to say.

“George was mad as heck,” Karl mutters, sitting on the bed to make himself comfortable. Dream realizes they’re not going to leave until they get some sort of explanation.

“Yeah. I’m your roommate for now, bud,” Alex snorts, sitting down beside Karl and leaning over to obnoxiously pat the air next to them. There’s no space left on the bed. “You can sit on the floor. You’re already tall so it’s only fair.”

Dream rolls his eyes and sits down on his own bed to which Alex scoffs playfully and Karl sneers.

“Nothing happened,” he says. Karl and Alex share a look before sending the same one to Dream. “Okay, well. It wasn’t that big of a problem. We just fought a little.”

“A little?” Karl repeats in disbelief. “A little? Dude, he came in looking like he was going to box someone’s head with a frying pan.”

“Oddly specific,” Alex comments with a bewildered gaze.

“I said something I didn’t mean.” The confession feels dry without the specific details, but Dream can’t dig deeper for several reasons. “I was just stressed out and things came out wrong.”

“Well, whatever it is,” Alex starts and Dream is thankful he notices that the vagueness is there for a reason. “I’m sure he’ll understand. Talk to him when you’re ready—but that better be soon. I want peaceful dinners.”

“We care about you, man,” Karl chimes in with a lopsided grin and Dream tries to send one back, but the light doesn’t reach his eyes.

“I really am your roommate though. So have fun dealing with me until you apologize.” With that, Alex lays down onto George’s bed and makes himself comfortable. He makes a show of it just to get on Dream’s nerves, but Dream knows the intent behind that is to distract him from his worries. Dream’s thankful for a friend like Alex.

“Oh and I’m a cuddler, by the way.”

Or maybe he isn't, but appreciates Alex's sentiment.

Soon is definitely not soon.

Karl is being more than generous to let them stay at his house for a month so Dream shouldn't be dragging this "drama" on for so long because it's definitely messing with the dynamic, therefore being counterintuitive to the reason Karl looped them here in the first place. They're just past the halfway mark of their stay, four days after *the* argument, when Karl has enough and lays down new ground rules.

"This is ridiculous!" Karl throws his hands up in the air when George ushers him out of his seat and into the one next to Dream's because he doesn't want to sit there. "You two are being babies."

"Ditto," Sapnap agrees in a heartbeat. He finishes the last sip of his monster energy drink and then tosses it towards the bin, but misses. Alex snickers to himself.

"Dude, *dudes*, look. I know whatever went down was pretty bad," Karl says, glancing back and forth between Dream and George who both look guilty as charged. "But you guys are best friends. We're all best friends! And we're here *together* so, for the love of God, just sort this shit out."

"For real," Alex jumps in, fingers reaching up to adjust his beanie out of habit. "I'm getting really tired of cuddling Dream every night. I don't know how you do it, Gogy."

"I don't do that," George denies quickly and Dream blinks twice. It's odd to him that George immediately goes to defend himself instead of realizing that Dream doesn't, in fact, need to be cuddled. Did he come off as that much of a loser?

"With the way you've been in my bed the past few days, I wouldn't be surprised," Sapnap counters, wiggling his eyebrows to add onto the effect. Dream whips his head to glance at George again, expecting some sort of witty remark, but George is just glaring with his lips pursed.

Joke or not, why had George been so quick to deny cuddling with Dream when Dream had been the butt-end of the joke, only to accept Sapnap's teasing when it was clearly directed to him?

That *was* a joke, wasn't it?

"We have another stream planned tomorrow on Alex's channel, so please try to make up by then," Karl sighs, slouching over in defeat when he sees that only Dream is paying attention to him at this point. "The fans will definitely know something is up and I really don't want everyone to stress over that."

"Okay," Dream says quietly and Karl tosses him a small, appreciative smile. Of course George hasn't agreed to it yet, way too preoccupied with fighting the other two men at the table, but Dream makes it his responsibility to reach out anyway.

He should've apologized the day of, if he's being honest. However, he was too shaken up to form coherent sentences. The morning after that, he felt guilty for not immediately addressing it and couldn't face George, and from then it had spiraled. As more and more guilt accumulated, the distance between them grew, until the others couldn't ignore it anymore and here they were.

In Dream's opinion, the situation had simply been blown out of proportion and that had been his fault. Now the wise thing to do would be to apologize and then admit that he can no longer continue helping George, in case something like this happens again.

But of course he can't pull through with the latter half.

He's both selfish and desperate, the worst combination for a *simp*. Whatever George asks for, Dream will provide; it's been like this since before he developed feelings, so why would it be any different now?

Out of the corner of his eye, he can see George stomp off angrily. Sapnap is on his heels, saying something Dream can't make out. By the looks of it—and "the looks" meaning Alex slamming his fist on his table while laughing and Sapnap wiping tears from the corners of his eyes—he assumes George is fed up with their teasing for today.

It's noon.

“What did you do?” Karl sighs, rubbing his temples with his fingers. He doesn’t get paid enough for this; he doesn’t get paid at *all* actually.

“Nothing,” Alex dismisses, finally catching his breath after laughing non-stop for the past five minutes. “Seriously! He’s just extra moody today. Sapnap’s checking on him.”

Karl turns to face Dream with an apologetic smile, “Maybe you should wait on having the talk then.”

“No,” Alex butts in after regaining composure. “No, no, no. If he doesn’t do it now, he’s *never* gonna do it. Look at that motherfucker. He’s a pussy.”

Dream snorts and Alex tosses him a playful grin.

“I’m 100% percent not kidding though. Do it now, after Sapnap’s done calming him down.”

“Are you sure?” Karl squints with uncertainty. They all know how menacing George can be when he’s mad.

“I have never been surer in my entire life!” Alex forms two thumbs up before nodding at Dream. “Go get ‘em, tiger.”

Dream thanks him with a painfully awkward smile before standing up and quietly walking upstairs. Karl’s and Alex’s voices get fainter while Sapnap’s and George’s grow louder. The latter pair sound muffled, thanks to the soundproof walls and their bedroom door being sealed shut, but Dream can still make out bits of their conversation and infer the missing words in between.

“You’re such a liar, George!”

“I’m not! It’s true!”

“Why the fuck am I second?”

Dream flinches at Sapnap's volume. His irritation bleeds through the cracks of their bedroom door, but there are no footsteps. They're most likely in a light-hearted argument; Dream can wait his turn.

"Are you seriously going to ask that question? It's self-explanatory."

"And offensive!" Dream can *hear* Sapnap's pout. "Well, did you figure it out?"

"Um," there's a pause. "I think?"

"Do you want to try again?"

It would be better for Dream to leave. It really would. He should turn on his heels and walk away—maybe clear his head and practice an apology before coming back in five minutes—but curiosity gets the best of him like it always does. He leans in closer, ear nearly touching the door, and he can hear George say something, but it's too quiet for him to decipher.

Then, the floorboards underneath him betray him with a squeak.

"Hello?" Sapnap sounds disgruntled.

Dream resists the urge to smack himself in the face. While he wants to run away, that would probably do more harm than good, so he owns up to his sneaking.

"Yeah, uh. Hi," Dream grimaces. "I was wondering if I could talk to George."

There's more muffled bickering and Dream thinks he hears a distinctive whine from George before feet stumble towards the door that swings open with no warning. Dream's greeted with a fierce glare from the shorter man of the two and a grin from the younger. Sapnap's hand lingers on George's back and Dream mentally praises him for having the patience to put up with George's temper.

"He's all yours!" Sapnap announces and then he turns his head, smile turning practically lethal when it's aimed towards the brit who looks away nervously. "Behave."

With that, Sapnap slips past the pair that loiter awkwardly by the door frame. It takes a second for George to be able to look Dream in the eye, but when he does he scoffs and steps back into the room. Dream stands motionless by the door, unsure of what to do, but George sits on the bed and then stares at him expectantly.

“Well? Are you gonna come in or what?”

Dream steps in cautiously, scared that one wrong move will have George changing his mind. He closes the door behind him slowly and George mutters something under his breath that he can't quite catch.

“What?” He asks and George rolls his eyes. Normally, Dream would be fed up with George's bratty temper tantrum, but right now he has broken bridges to mend and driving a truck over it would do anything but that.

“Lock it.” George repeats with an irritated grumble and Dream does just that. “Come here.”

Dream's legs feel heavier than usual as he walks over to George, tentatively leaning against the edge of the bed to silently ask for permission to sit. George sighs and gestures at the space next to him.

Now that Dream's here, he realizes he's unsure of where to start. He sits down quietly and stares at George for a good minute before the moment is broken.

“So, pray tell me, why did you interrupt?”

Dream's throat grows dry, “George.”

“That's my name, don't wear it out,” George scoffs, eyes trained on his lap, where his fingers are busy playing with a loose thread from his pants.

“George,” Dream repeats, desperate. “I'm sorry.”

In front of him, George freezes. The room gets colder (or maybe it's just the beating of Dream's heart getting slower).

"I'm really sorry," Dream seizes the opportunity presented by George's silence to continue. "I was being a complete dick, I know. I was thinking about how you might feel if people found out, but then you basically said you didn't *care* and I started getting worried because- because what if it happens and suddenly you *do* care? I don't like when you get upset, George."

George stares up at him with parted lips, but nothing comes out. Dream takes this as a sign to keep speaking.

"I care about you, Georgie," Dream smiles nervously, the nickname feeling natural on his tongue. "I care about you a lot. That's why I *volunteered* to do all of this. You didn't force me, idiot. I-

-wanted to kiss you.

Dream coughs, "I was happy to help."

George raises a finger, asking for Dream to pause; Dream doesn't have anything more to say anyway. "So let me get this straight," George pinches the bridge of his nose. "You threw a fit saying I was disregarding your feelings.. when your feelings didn't concern yourself but me?"

Dream flushes, not expecting George to word it like that. "Well," he begins a futile attempt to save some of his dignity. "I wouldn't say a fit."

"A fit," George says firmly. Then he tosses a glance in Dream's direction. "You're a prick."

Dream laughs, a weight lifting off his shoulders at the sight of George's small smile. "Yeah, you never fail to remind me."

"No, seriously," George mumbles, lightly hitting Dream on the arm. It doesn't hurt, but Dream still rubs the area. "You made it sound like I cornered you and forced you to- you know."

"Don't worry, it's not like that," Dream reassures and then raises an eyebrow in amusement. "I

wouldn't let myself be cornered by someone fun-sized."

"Oh, fuck you," George laughs, short and sweet. He tilts his head back, staring up at the idle ceiling fan.

Dream copies him, humming softly, "What were you and Sapnap arguing about? It sounded pretty heated at first. I feared my life and I wasn't even in here."

"How much did you hear?" George asks, awfully suspicious. It almost sounds like *'Why were you listening?'*

"Not much," Dream answers truthfully. He turns his head to look at George, but George is still focused on the bland ceiling above him. "Something about him being second and you wanting to 'try again'?" He watches George stiffen up, the muscles on his jaw growing tense, and tries to break the growing feeling of discomfort. "I'm guessing he's second to *me* because let's face it. I'm first at everything."

"Yeah, especially at being an idiot," George fires and much to Dream's delight, he seems to ease up. "You're not entirely wrong though. You *were* first in this scenario."

Dream thinks George's shrug is too nonchalant for what he's just said. "What?" he asks, losing all of his impish mirth from earlier. Being a part of an argument between his best friends isn't exactly heart warming. "What did I do?"

"Nothing," George replies softly. He falls back onto the sheets, fluttering his eyes shut, and if it weren't for the faint color beginning to bloom on his cheeks, Dream would've taken his reluctance as a signal to stop prying.

"Tell me," he urges, bumping George's thigh with his own and shifting to face him.

George refuses to open his eyes, "He was just upset I went to you first about my.. problem? Whatever it is." A yawn filters through his sentence and he drapes an arm over his eyes to block out the sunlight that's glaring in from the windows.

It takes Dream a second to figure out why he feels so sour upon hearing George's explanation. *First*. George had said first, implying that he had told Sapnap about the kissing ordeal which in

turn meant-

“You kissed him?”

“To be fair, *he* kissed *me*, if we want to get technical,” George scoffs. His right leg has started bouncing up and down from where it hangs, over the edge of the bed, pressed against Dream. The sound of jeans sliding against each other normally irritates the taller male, but right now, he can’t care enough to complain.

“Way too eager,” a laugh escapes George as he recalls the memory. “It made me start to wonder if I really *was* forcing you because, again, you never initiate our sessions. Well, only if I ask you to. So yeah, I felt really bad.”

“You weren’t forcing me,” Dream says for what feels like the umpteenth time that day and George hums, grateful for the clarification. “Is that- is that what you wanted to try again?”

“Hm?” George asks, mind already drifting between a state of reality and unconsciousness. Dream grabs his arm and yanks it away from his face so that the sun bothers him again. Sure enough, George’s eyes crack open and he throws a lazy glance at Dream. “What?”

“Were you going to kiss Sapnap again?” Dream asks a bit more bluntly this time and George blinks, gaze shifting from Dream’s face to the iron grip the blonde has on his forearm.

“Um,” George begins, a confused frown etching onto his forehead. “Yeah, I guess? I just wanted to see if it was different. Dream- Clay, why does it matter?”

The blonde ignores the question all together, using the leverage he has from his grip on the other to draw himself closer. “Tell him you don’t need his help,” Dream orders, now dangerously close to George’s face. “I’m teaching you, he doesn’t need to.”

“You both kiss differently,” George laughs a bit awkwardly, trying to move away from Dream’s heated gaze, but having nowhere to go. “The more experience, the better, isn’t it?”

The arm Dream’s holding onto gets pinned next to George’s head and George can’t even form a question before he’s suddenly caged underneath Dream. Their breaths mingle, but while Dream’s are heavy and shake as if he’s holding something back, George’s are short and match the quick

pace of his heart.

The look on Dream's face is frightening.

"There's nothing he can teach you that I can't," Dream mumbles, not even trying to hide the way his eyes rake over George's facial features. "Besides, I'd be indirectly kissing my *brother*. That wasn't in the contract, was it?"

"We didn't have a contract," George huffs, weakly wiggling his arms that remain tight in Dream's grasp. Dream doesn't budge an inch, only smirking at George in that same frustratingly cocky way he always does whenever he wins something. "Fine, whatever! I wasn't planning on kissing him more than twice anyway. Now let me up."

"Mm, I don't think so," Dream teases and George splutters, claiming that he's been scammed. It sends Dream into a wheezing fit and amid the shorter man's rant, he pulls him up and flips them over carefully.

George stops berating Dream to yelp when he feels as if he's going to fall onto the floor. His hands reach out, desperately bunching into Dream's shirt, but it's to no avail. He feels himself slip out of the blonde's hold and he braces himself for the impact.

It never comes.

"Careful, princess," Dream laughs, arms wrapped around George's waist as he slowly drags the startled man higher up on his lap. "Wouldn't want you getting bruises on that pretty face of yours."

"Shut up," George seethes, awkwardly shifting in Dream's lap. This is new for them—new for George in general. He's never been in someone else's lap, other than his mother's (when he was a toddler, might he add), and now here he was hiked up on Dream's for God knows what reason. "What are you doing?"

"Easy," Dream tries to soothe George of his suspicions by patting the small of his back reassuringly. His hands itch with the urge to travel lower, but it's best to stop that train of thought. Especially when the object of his affection is *literally* sitting on his lap. "Do you remember what you said the other day?"

“I said a lot of things the other day, whichever day ‘the other day’ even means,” George snarks, loosening his fists and trying to smoothen the crinkles in Dream’s shirt apologetically.

“You told me to scare you,” Dream reminds, leaning in to brush his nose over George’s.

It’s soft and bleeds of his true intentions, but that’s everything he’s sure George doesn’t want, so he hides behind a devilish grin. And *fuck it*, Dream thinks, moving his hands down to cup over George’s backside. It earns him a surprised gasp and a flustered glare.

“I’m going to make you regret that.”

Before George has time to protest, Dream dives in. Their lips clash together and Dream relishes in the way George responds almost immediately, melting into Dream’s embrace. He drinks in the way George’s mouth feels hot and heavy against his, pressing the brunet closer to him than ever before, and hears the soft gasps of air George takes.

There’s inexperience that’s expected, but also a forbidden eagerness that matches Dream’s.

“Hey,” Dream mumbles, pulling away just enough to speak. George makes a noise in protest, but Dream holds his ground, no matter how much he wants to continue to kiss the man senseless. “Is this okay?”

Carefully, his hands flex over the curve of George’s ass before delivering a shallow squeeze. The reaction is immediate; George falls forward, his forehead pressing against Dream’s as a shudder runs through his entire body. Dream feels the fire in the pit of his stomach begin to consume him.

“George,” Dream whispers, insistent in getting a verbal response even though the answer is clear. “I need to hear you say it.”

“Yes, asshole!” George replies, hands reaching up and folding over one another as they cup the back of Dream’s neck. With the new leverage, he roughly tugs Dream in.

And who was Dream to deny such a beauty of what it wants.

They lose themselves in one another quickly. Dream kisses with a passion he can no longer hide while George obediently takes all that's thrown at him. The latter's lips go slack, struggling to keep up with the fast pace, but Dream doesn't care. He breaks the kiss shortly, nipping at George's lower lip to ask him to part them. George is too dazed to understand, so Dream takes the chance to knead his ass firmly, making the former gasp and finally grant Dream the access he needs.

Their tongues slide over and under one another, neither backing down from the fight for dominance. Dream's tongue swirls once, twice, over George's before reaching deeper, leaving no part unexplored. Above him, George is struggling to keep up, Dream's sinful groping only serving to weaken him even more until he ultimately loses. Satisfied, Dream pulls away and the smile he flashes his friend is almost predatory.

"Georgie," he mumbles, one hand coming up to cup George's jaw. Dream's thumb catches the string of saliva that connects their rosy lips and a filthy idea comes to mind. It's one that Dream's been thinking about for weeks; something that's finally become attainable.

He brings his finger to George's lips, pushing into the warm cavern. George pauses for a second, trying to process what just happened, and Dream expects him to pull away in disgust. To his surprise, George presses his lips shut.

Heat envelops Dream's thumb as George lets it rest in his mouth, unsure. A second later, Dream discerns a soft sucking and then feels George's tongue press against the pad of his finger before the man pulls off with a small 'pop'. Dream is stunned, to say the least.

George smiles shyly, "Was that right?" His lips press into a thin line, grimacing as the severity of what he's done slowly sets in, but he searches for Dream's approval nonetheless. "Did I do good?"

"Yeah," Dream affirms breathlessly, eyes traveling down from George's swollen lips to the pale expanse of his neck. If Dream is going to risk this much today, it wouldn't hurt to indulge himself in more.

In fact, he *should* because he never knows when this will be ripped away from him, right? He doesn't know when George will decide that he's learned enough and pull himself away from Dream, only to waltz into the arms of someone else. He doesn't know when George will have had his fun with him and they'll go back to how they were before, with George offering him nothing while all Dream wants is more. He doesn't know when George will leave him missing all that he once had.

He hikes George closer until their chests are flush against each other. "Ready?" Dream mutters and

George makes a noise as if to ask what for. “You’re going to want to pay attention to this. It’s your next lesson.”

The words die on George’s jawline, morphing into gentle kisses. Dream slowly works his way up to the junction underneath George’s ear, nipping playfully every now and then, nothing too extreme. Once he reaches his destination, he playfully pats the side of George’s bum, catching the man’s attention.

“This isn’t..” George trails off, breathing shakily.

Dream chuckles, aware of what George is trying to say, “It’s a form of kisses, Georgie. You want to learn it all, don’t you?”

The following kisses down George’s neck are open-mouthed, Dream’s tongue flattening against the salty skin every now and then. Eventually, gentle suction and teasing bites are also applied. Dream focuses on one spot, sucking on the small patch of skin before rolling it between his rows of teeth. Once he’s done, he soothes the area with his tongue and blows on it to feel the way George trembles above him.

It’s unbelievable, really. Dream feels like the luckiest man on earth to have a deity here in his arms. George is beautiful, ethereal, could parallel Aphrodite if he wanted to. Yet the sounds he makes—the jagged gasps, the lovely whines—resemble the sound of Apollo’s lyre. *Oh* and if George was the son of Apollo, with the way he basks in the sun so tall and proud with nothing around him but harmonious sounds, then Dream was surely the son of Dionysious, with chaos and no sense of self in a crowd full of those who wish to sin.

George’s hand tugs on Dream’s hair hard enough for it to sting, but that only eggs Dream on further and he moves his lips down to another place on George’s neck where he applies the same treatment as before. When George emits a soft sigh of approval, tilting his head back to give Dream better access, the younger man pulls away with a mischievous smirk.

George snaps his head to face Dream, pouting, “Why’d.. why’d you stop?”

“Tell me, George,” Dream mumbles, resting a hand on the nape of George’s neck and stamping his thumb over one of the many blooming bruises. “Do you think Sapnap could’ve taught you this?”

The question catches George off guard and when he doesn’t reply as quick as Dream’s thin

patience wants him to, Dream digs into the plush skin of George's neck with both his thumb and pointer finger. He can feel the spike in George's heart rate from the pulses that pump rhythmically under his fingers and it *excites* him.

George's hands hook onto Dream's forearm, but make no move to loosen his grip. If anything, they only encourage him to press harder and so he does, taking in the way George gasps, needy and flushed, before the man *finally* cries out.

"No! You narcissistic arse!"

His eyes shine with unshed tears, reminding Dream of how easily he cries. The blood in Dream's body rushes down at record speed and the way George is writhing in his lap, helpless under Dream's touch, only makes matters worse.

He lets go, dropping his hands at his sides before curling his fingers into the sheets of the bed and trying to will away the fucking boner he knows he's about to sport. "Lesson over," he says quickly, trying to usher George off his lap by moving his legs.

All that does is cause George to slip closer, their hips mere centimeters from touching, and Dream inhales sharply. God, how could he have been such a fucking idiot? If he couldn't control himself around George normally, what made him think he'd have some superhuman restraint now?

God seems to be merciful on Dream today because George gets the memo and stands up, off of Dream's lap where there's a new kind of heat emitting. He turns around, searching for something in the room with his eyes while Dream silently watches him.

"Jesus, Clay," George whispers and Dream tries to see what George is in awe of, only to see the smaller man staring directly at his reflection. Their gazes meet in the mirror and George lifts his hand, tugging at the collar of his shirt. "How am I going to explain *these*, idiot?"

Dream's eyes trace the constellation of purple and red hues on George's otherwise unblemished complexion. They stand out almost tauntingly, tempting Dream to leave more all over the newly exposed skin George is showing and maybe lower, lower, *lower*.

"We fought?" Dream offers and George scoffs.

“As if they would believe that you’re capable of hurting anyone, especially me,” George mumbles, still looking over the marks. “You’re too much of a softie and that’s not something anyone should lie about.” Then he turns his head and Dream can see the faint marks his fingers have also left on George’s skin.

It’s too much.

Dream discreetly tugs his shirt down, hoping to hide his very evident problem. George doesn’t notice (blessed be the Gods) and does a small twirl so that he can face Dream again. “I need a whisk,” he says abruptly and Dream gives him an incredulous look. “I saw it on tiktok.”

That elicits a laugh from Dream, “You saw it on tiktok. Of course you did.”

“It works!” George grumbles, going over to the door and unlocking it, only to peek his head out as if they were in the middle of some covert mission. “The house is quiet. Seems like they left to get lunch.”

“Probably did,” Dream agrees, hoping George would just get on with it and *leave* so that he could race off into the bathroom and handle his.. issue. “Must’ve thought we needed privacy. That’s thoughtful.”

“None of them know what I want though,” George complains, swinging the door open and then finally stepping out. “It better be good food,” is the last thing he says before Dream hears him descend the stairs.

Dream counts to five before standing up and making a beeline for the bathroom, trying not to be too loud. God forbid George hears him and figures out how much of a fucking *pervert* he is.

He stares at the mirror in the bathroom, taking in the sight of his messy locks, wrinkled shirt, and the red flush on his cheeks. “Fuck,” he groans, flipping down the lid of the toilet seat before sitting down and working down the zipper of his jeans. “Fuck this.”

Scare me.

Dream shakes his head as the words echo in his mind, his hands working hastily to push down the waistband of his briefs.

“Scare you,” he repeats with a pathetic laugh. “As if I could.”

A sigh leaves him as he runs a hand through his hair and then he hunches over, eyes fluttering shut to succumb to the lustful wonders of his brain.

“But you, darling..”

Dream tosses his head back, a guttural moan evading him as he pictures his glimpse of Heaven on his knees before him.

“You’re going to ruin me.”

Chapter End Notes

The amount of support I have been receiving recently is insane and I am so thankful for it. I have a lot to improve on as a writer, so please bear with me. I will try my best!

This is something that has always been a hobby of mine and it's a relief that people enjoy what I put out there. Reading comments never fail to make my day and I appreciate each and every one of you who have shared your thoughts with me! I also appreciate the kudos (I can't believe we're nearing 1000) and also the silent readers!

I've been thinking about making a twitter solely for my writing so that people can share their thoughts to me more directly, but I'm a little nervous, haha. I plan on writing other fics in the future, be it chaptered ones or one-shots and I might even do some while I'm working on this fic. (I get DNF brainrot often.) So, it would be nice to have somewhere to update people, meet other writers, or just talk to fellow MCYT fans.

I'll plug my twitter in the notes section if I eventually do decide to make one!

Again, thank you, really, and I'm sorry if I don't get to reply to all the comments!

New Territory

Chapter Summary

Dream knows that he has long since forfeited this game he's chosen to play with Eros.

But Hope is a dangerous thing.

And Dream is too much of a fool in love to snip Hope's roots before it buds.

Chapter Notes

A reminder that this fic is rated E for Explicit and not E for Everyone. (Haha I got Jokes, but For Real.)

That being said, there's a bit of nsfw in the beginning of this chapter. I.. apologize.

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If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The Florida heat pales in comparison to what Dream is experiencing.

His hand forms a tight fist around his dick, thumb rubbing just under the tip like he imagines George would do with his tongue. George is a tease if Dream's ever seen one, he would be merciless—ghosting his lips over the head only to pull away after a quick peck, taking Dream into his mouth just a bit past the halfway mark before pausing tauntingly.

Dream uses his other hand to muffle his moans, being shamefully louder than usual because *fuck it has never felt this good before*. He pumps his cock once, twice, imagining George's slender fingers instead of his own. An image flashes through his mind of George kneeling there, all pliant with his jaw slack, letting Dream fuck into the welcoming heat of his mouth.

“Baby,” Dream sighs, calling out to the rendition of George that his mind has crafted. It's a meticulous work of art made from hours of staring—almost too real.

This version of George looks up at him expectantly, tipping his head back and parting his lips.

Dream curses, a borderline growl stuck in his throat, and he quickens the pace of his hand. A few more flicks of the wrist and he's cumming, painting George's face in streaks of his mess.

George sits there, pretty with pink cheeks, trying to catch remnants on his tongue. Some of Dream's cum is caught in George's fringe, but neither of them pay that any mind. Dream's breath hitches as he thumbs his sensitive tip, pressing at the slit and picturing the way George would deliver kittenish licks to lap up the mess Dream has made.

Dream's eyes flutter open and he sighs at the bland reality that greets him. A loud knock at the door causes him to spring into action, hastily ripping a generous amount of toilet paper and wiping the mess off his hands as well as the tiles below him.

"Yes?" He answers, voice cracking and counteracting his attempts to not sound too suspicious.

"Hurry up, I need to pee!" Sapnap shouts, jiggling the doorknob to show just how serious he is.

Dream tucks himself back into his pants and tugs up his zipper before heading over to the sink. He washes and washes, trying to rub away the sin that taints him.

The guilt still lingers.

When he finally opens the door, Sapnap races in and pushes him out before slamming the door shut behind him. Dream blinks, puzzled by the younger's actions, but shrugs and stretches his back. Being hunched over for that long isn't doing much to fix his gamer posture.

"Dream! We got you food!" Karl shouts from downstairs and as if on cue, Dream's stomach grumbles.

He's greeted with a subway sandwich when he arrives at the kitchen and it warms his heart that they've memorized his order by now. Karl shoots him a thumbs up when Dream mumbles a word of gratitude and Dream finds himself smiling back at him.

There are two vacant seats. One by Alex and one by George.

As much as he wants to sit by George and show the others that they've already made up, he feels filthy. Him acting so innocent with his best friend at his side as if he hadn't just jerked off to the thought of him; what a joke.

Alex scoffs when Dream occupies the chair next to him and then slings an arm around the taller man's broad shoulders. "Dude," he begins with *that* tone of his, "It's okay, you can sit next to your boy. We know."

The subway sandwich drops on the table and if it weren't still wrapped up, Dream would have to starve through today.

"What?" he exclaims in confusion, leaning away so that he can fully face his friend who is wearing the cockiest of smirks. "What the fuck are you saying?"

"Really?" Alex laughs and then turns his attention to George who has been poking skeptically at his sandwich for the past five minutes. "Gogy!"

George looks up at the pair in confusion while Karl sits down next to him, excited to join the conversation. Thundering footsteps echo down the hallway as Sapnap jogs downstairs, too eager for his own good.

"Alright," Alex says in a mock British accent. Dream watches with horror as the boy reaches over the table and gestures at George's neck. "What's this then?"

"Um," George begins awkwardly, glancing at Dream for help. Dream is too focused on the marks that are still so prominent on George's neck. There are shades of blue, purple, pink, and the faintest hints of red.

(Though they are a bit fainter now, so perhaps George's tiktok tips did help. Dream will give credit where it's due.)

"No way," Karl whispers, leaning in to observe George as if he's some sort of laboratory specimen. "When I told you guys to make up, I didn't expect it to go like this."

There's a round of laughter from everybody but George and Dream, who are both suddenly too busy staring at their food to comment. It's arguable that their silence is the loudest thing in the

room.

Sapnap whistles, “Dream, you’re an animal, dude.” At this, Dream’s pride swells, but he still refuses to comment. He doesn’t really see the harm in things, almost relishing in the way George squirms shyly in his seat. That is until Sapnap continues. “I would’ve never gone this far.”

The table quiets down to a few confused mumbles. Sapnap slaps a hand over his mouth in regret, knowing he’s said too much and George heaves out a defeated sigh.

“Shit, I’m so sorry,” Sapnap says, staring at George with wide, apologetic eyes. George simply stands up, quietly excusing himself from the table, but Sapnap immediately engulfs him in a back hug. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to, really!”

Dream doesn’t realize his hands have curled into fists until he feels his nails dig into his palms, threatening to pierce the skin.

“It’s fine,” George mumbles, trying to distance himself from Sapnap, who has yet to loosen his hold.

Sapnap rests his chin on George’s shoulder with a pout, “I really am sorry, Georgie.”

“What’s going on?” Karl asks for clarification on his and Alex’s behalf. Sapnap waves his hand dismissively and George seizes the opportunity to slip out of his grasp.

“Nothing,” Dream finally says. The stare he gives Sapnap is a silent warning. “Sapnap was just being an idiot.”

“Yeah,” Sapnap agrees quickly.

George walks out of the kitchen without a word and the others watch him, a different degree of concern painted on each of their faces. Dream considers going up to their room to check on George, but he’s sure that would only worsen their situation. Besides, he has a message or two to relay to Sapnap, who is now doing his best to avoid meeting his eyes.

“So, when were you gonna tell us DreamNotFound wasn’t just a bit,” Alex asks, trying to break the tension.

Dream laughs, shaking his head, “It’s still a bit. We were just.. goofing around a little.”

“Oh,” Karl says, scratching the back of his head. “Like a friends with benefits kind of thing?”

“Without the sex,” Dream clarifies, amused at how flustered Karl turns. He is by no means an innocent man, Dream knows this, and yet he blushes like he’s never heard anything vulgar in his entire life.

This could be good, Dream decides as his friends begin to discuss something else. Now him and George didn’t have to hide their activities, right? But George did want to keep things a secret and Dream had blown that away for him by being too greedy.

Dream closes his eyes, reminiscing the way George had looked when Dream had created those bruises. His addictive noises, the trembles that combed through his body—they’ll never leave Dream’s mind for as long as he remains trapped in the maze that is his admiration for George.

(And Dream’s always been a bit directionally challenged, so he might be stuck for a while—a long while, if not forever.)

“Sapnap,” Dream says when they’re the only two left at the table.

Sapnap, who’s busy watching Alex and Karl fight over movies in the living room, replies absentmindedly. “Yeah?”

“Why did you kiss George?”

The way the wind howls outside is eerie and if Dream weren’t so serious about the topic at hand, he would’ve felt giddy at the unintentional theatrics. Sapnap seems to share his sentiments, eyeing the curtain that rustles violently in response to the breeze that had blown in.

“I’ll answer your questions only if you answer my questions too,” Sapnap shrugs. Dream’s grip on

his glass of water tightens, but this goes unnoticed. “Deal?”

“Deal,” Dream replies without a second thought. The feeling that looms in the pit of his stomach is far from hatred—he could never hate his best friend—but it still leaves Dream’s mouth feeling sour.

“He asked me to kiss him,” Sapnap answers far too nonchalantly, rubbing the nape of his neck. “I’ll admit, I wasn’t too thrilled about it, but I relented after all his exasperated begging.” The ice cubes floating in Dream’s drink clink against his glass as Sapnap mulls over his next choice of words. “My turn, right?”

Dream nods subtly, unsure as to exactly what Sapnap wants him to answer to.

“You were in the bathroom for so long,” Sapnap laughs, finally moving his gaze to meet Dream’s, “And you left the toilet’s lid down.”

“This doesn’t sound like a question,” Dream mumbles, taking a sip of his water to try and seem unbothered, although he’s sure there’s a faint blush on his cheeks.

“Well, I’m just surprised you’ve become so courteous,” Sapnap raises an eyebrow in a ridiculously smug way. “Especially in a house full of boys.”

From the living room, Karl and Alex start bickering on cue as if they were paid actors.

“Why don’t you tell me what you were really up to, Dreamie,” Sapnap laughs and rests his chin on his palm, feeling way too entertained by Dream’s horrified expressions. “One brother to the other.”

“Brothers don’t talk about things like this,” Dream groans, glaring at his ice cubes with almost enough heat to melt them. “You sound like you already know, so why are you asking me?”

“Because,” Sapnap says, leaning over and dropping his voice to barely a whisper. “I want to know if my guess is right. If…” His eyes travel up the staircase and Dream turns his head to follow his gaze.

George is standing there, looking over the fenced barrier to discreetly watch Karl and Alex fight. There's a small smile on his face and his eyes are half-lidded and he is so *so* pretty and *so* alluring. His hair is a bird's nest and Dream guesses it's because George's habit of grabbing his hair when he's stressed.

(He wonders if George would be open to him carding his fingers through those brunette locks as well.)

"You were thinking about him?" Sapnap finishes, flashing Dream a grin full of mirth when they face each other again. Dream knows he means no harm, but he has an overwhelming urge to throw the cup of water at his face.

"What do you think?"

Sapnap scoffs lightly at Dream's attitude, "Don't answer my question with a question, dickhead."

"No, seriously," Dream rolls his eyes, raising the glass up to his lips and speaking again before he drinks, "Give me your genuine thoughts."

"Alright, what do I think, you say?" Sapnap asks with a shrug, his demeanor suddenly changing. The switch is so quick and yet so natural, it unsettles Dream. "What I think is," his best friend continues, briefly glancing towards where Dream knows George is standing and then meeting his stare dead on once more.

"If I were you, I sure as hell would be."

Dream slams his glass down on the countertop, reaching over the table and grabbing a fistful of Sapnap's shirt to draw him in close. The television drowns out the commotion and saves them from the humiliation of having someone walk in on them. Yet something about the way in which Sapnap seems unphased by Dream's act of aggression tells Dream that he wouldn't really care.

"I guess I have my answer then," Sapnap snickers, circling his hand around Dream's wrist. His touch is gentle and he doesn't pull Dream's hand away, so the gesture seems sympathetic and that makes Dream feel even worse.

"Fuck you," he concedes with no intended malice, dropping his gaze onto the marbled countertop.

The table is wet here and there from the water that sloshed out of his cup when he had angrily set it down. Dream considers occupying himself with cleaning up the mess.

Sapnap's thumb brushes over Dream's knuckles in an attempt to soothe him. They sit in silence until Sapnap finally pulls Dream's hand away from his shirt. "I'll get a paper towel."

"I'm fucked," Dream scoffs and leans back in his chair, feeling hysterical. Sapnap works quietly to clean the mess Dream has made and nods once to push Dream into elaborating. "I'm so fucking fucked, holy shit."

"Language," Sapnap teases, tossing the used paper towel into the trash bin and whistling when he makes the shot. "You're definitely down bad though."

"Yeah, no shit, Sherlock."

Sapnap raises both his hands in mock surrender, cheeky grin having yet to fall from his face as he returns to his seat. He props his elbows on the table, interlocking his fingers underneath his chin, and tilts his head to the side. Dream feels like he's being studied under a microscope.

"What?" He asks, clearly uncomfortable by Sapnap staring him down. His fingers twiddle with one another and his gaze is way too shifty for Sapnap to not notice.

"You're twenty one," Sapnap states the obvious and Dream squints, unsure of what he's getting at. "Act like it. Make a move. I know damn well you weren't this shy around people you liked nearly a decade ago, not to mention you're like the cockiest person to ever exist, so why are you being such a little bitch?"

Dream rolls his eyes, a smile finally creeping back onto his lips as he tosses Sapnap a half-hearted glare. "You're one to talk. You can't even muster the courage to wake me up sometimes."

"That's different," Sapnap argues, "You're like a demon when you wake up and I didn't want to be thrown back to Texas."

"Oh, come on."

“It’s true! Lover boy at 6 by the way,” Sapnap says with a wink and before Dream can understand what he means, he’s dashing off to join Karl and Alex in the living room. Dream feels abandoned, betrayed, and—

“Clay.”

—screwed.

“George!” Dream spins around so quickly, he nearly falls off his chair. He does end up uncomfortably stabbing his side against the counter, but he tries his best not to let his pain show. “Uh, hey. What’s up?”

“Can we talk?” The way George tugs down the sleeves of his shirt mimics the strings of Dream’s heart. He doesn’t miss the way George cautiously glances at the archway separating the kitchen from the living room. “Privately?”

“Of course,” Dream rushes to say, gesturing for George to lead the way.

He’s surprised when George takes that as a sign for him to grab one of Dream’s hands. The (adorable) sweater paw causes the grip to be loose, but Dream is careful to prevent them from parting. George is silent during the entire walk to their room, save for the one time he curses Alex off for whistling when they pass by the noisy trio. Dream is the same, heart threatening to hop right on out his mouth.

When they’re finally alone, the first thing George does is toss Alex’s clothes off his bed. “Ew,” he grimaces, kicking the pile to the side and then sitting down on the edge of the bed. He pats the empty space next to him and Dream sits down, hands folded over his lap because he’s not sure where else to put them. (Well, he can think of a few places, but that’s not why George brought him here. Or at least he thinks it isn’t.)

“I’m sorry.”

Dream frowns, “About what?” Out of the corner of his eye, he can see George’s fingers tremble underneath the cuff of his sleeves.

“I dragged you into this huge mess,” George heaves a sigh, burying his face in his hands which

causes his words to muffle. “I shouldn’t have been so stupid.”

“Huh?” It’s instinctive—the way Dream’s hands reach out to tug George’s away from his face so that he can get a better look at him. “It’s fine. It’s not a mess and you’re not stupid.”

“No, no, I am! I just,” George cuts himself off, squeezing his eyes shut. “I should’ve thought things out more. I didn’t mean for this to happen. They probably think I’m weird and I made them think *you’re* weird too just because I’m too much of a fucking loser to just go and *kiss* someone!”

“George- Georgie,” Dream starts, pulling the distraught man closer until he can rest their foreheads together. “Hey, listen to me. We’re okay, yeah?”

George glances up at him, lashes wet from tears that threaten to spill, and Dream’s heart lurches in his chest. He cups the right side of George’s face, thumb rubbing circles over the prominent cheekbone.

“They’re not gonna think we’re *weird*, idiot. Sure, they’re not used to it, but they don’t care. They love us, you know that, and this—us—it’s normal,” Dream mumbles, pulling away just enough so that he can admire all of George’s features without breathing into his face. “Besides, I’m sure the only thing they’d be upset about—if anything—is that we’re not in a *real* relationship. I mean unless...”

That earns him a playful smack on the shoulder. Still, a lone tear falls from the corner of George’s eye and meets the tip of Dream’s thumb. George apologizes profusely and Dream laughs, shaking his head.

“But seriously,” George says, leaning into Dream’s touch without realizing it. “I’m sorry about pulling you into this. We don’t have to continue if you don’t want to.”

“It’s fine, loser,” Dream pauses to fix George’s hair with his unoccupied hand. “I’m alright with continuing if you still want more practice.”

George glances up at him, just one syllable of a broken chuckle pushing out of him in the form of a huff. “I feel pathetic,” he admits, voice just above a whisper as he flutters his eyes shut.

It’s a silent invitation.

Dream leans in, still cradling George's cheek ever so carefully, like he's afraid George would disappear if he were too rough. Their lips meet, gentle and almost shy; it's nothing like their other kisses. There's a pattern of languid motions followed by chaste touches and every now and then, they spare small gasps of air and hushed giggles.

When they pull away, George's pupils are dilated and his lips glisten with mixed spit. It sounds disgusting, but Dream is only further enamored. Before he can stop himself, he brushes his lips over George's nose, trailing soft kisses up its curved bridge until he reaches the expanse of his forehead. There, he rests a kiss just under his bangs, resisting the temptation to brush back George's hair for something more romantic.

"I don't deserve you," George says and their breaths mingle from the close proximity.

"No, you don't," Dream teases, but the rest of his jokes die on the tip of his tongue when George leans in to kiss him on the cheek.

George smirks, amused at the way Dream stiffens, and then pulls away so that the taller man's hand falls unceremoniously in the space between them. It lands on George's thigh and George hisses at the contact, but doesn't brush Dream away.

"Why are you doing this, Clay?" George mumbles instead, his own hands reaching out to play with Dream's as it rests atop his lap. His fingers are small and delicate as they wrap around Dream's hand, massaging the slightly tanned skin. They travel around absentmindedly, feeling all the dips and hills, and eventually they come to a halt.

Dream tries not to focus on the way George's hands are holding his own just above the brunette's thigh, "Because I care about you." His voice quivers and he moves his hand so that he can hold onto one of George's. "You're special to me, George. You're important."

Their eyes meet again, but this time Dream knows that he's no longer hiding the intensity of what he feels and he's surprised to see George stare back at him, not faltering once. Normally, George would be far too shy to even listen to Dream's cheesy remarks—begging him to *please, for the love of God* be quiet—let alone stare at him as he speaks with sincerity.

"You always have been and you always will be."

There's a loud knock on the door that catches both of their attention. "Come in!" George says after they jump away from each other, but the door handle doesn't budge. They shoot each other a look of confusion until Karl's voice squeezes in through the gaps.

"I'm not coming in! I don't trust it!" Karl shouts, making Dream snort and George squeak. "I was just gonna say we're gonna go chill out in the pool. Feel free to join if you two are not... fill in the blank! Bye!"

"We're not *like that*, Karl!" George shouts back, racing towards the door to swing it open in a half-assed attempt to defend himself. When he gets there, Karl is long gone, so George simply shuts the door again and stomps his foot in frustration. Dream stares at him in amusement, his palms placed on the bed yet situated behind him so that he can rest some weight on his arms. He's got a lot of snarky remarks he can make right now that'll probably turn George into a tomato, but he chooses to spare him.

It's unfortunate that George can't see how pretty he looks with rosy cheeks and lips bruised into a cherry tint.

"We're swimming," George declares, sifting through his dresser to find a pair of swimming trunks. Dream finally stands up, heading to his side of the room so that he can retrieve his own as well. "Our reputation is on the line."

"You're so dramatic," Dream replies, closing his drawer once he finds what he's looking for. His hands reach down, fingers curling over the hem of his shirt, as he gets ready to snatch it off. He's halted by a yelp of protest and then a weakly thrown shirt.

"Go to the bathroom! Don't change here," George scolds, scurrying over to retrieve the shirt he sacrificed as a weapon. Dream gives him a curt look and then tugs his shirt off, tossing it right at George's face for revenge. George yelps, dropping the clothing in his hands to peel Dream's shirt off his face and Dream doubles over in laughter at the sight.

"Gross! Fucking gross!"

"Oh, stop it," Dream manages in between his signature wheezes. "I showered in the morning!" He crouches, picking up George's clothes for him and then placing them neatly on his bed, but George still opts to glare at him and Dream scoffs. "I'm sorry, princess, did I make you mad?"

“Don’t,” George grumbles, hurling Dream’s shirt back at him, “don’t call me that.”

“Whatever you say,” Dream shrugs, hands reaching for the strings of his sweatpants. He tugs the knot undone and then hooks his fingers into the waistband, pulling it down his legs. “Princess.”

George whips around, probably to tell Dream off, but stops right as Dream is about to strip away his last piece of clothing. Dream smirks, noting the way George’s lips part and close several times whilst his eyes widen in shock, making him look like a fish out of water.

“You’re unbelievable! I’m leaving!” George shouts, sounding scandalized. Dream laughs at the way George trips over his own feet as he races out the door.

Alright, he wasn’t *actually* going to strip naked in front of his best friend—he’s not that crazy and impulsive (not yet)—but he knew pretending to do so would grant him a priceless reaction. And it did. The expression on George’s face would definitely be one that Dream would remember for a long time.

Then again, there have been many incidents this month that Dream might never end up forgetting. No matter how much he may want to.

“Splash water at me again and see what happens.”

Sapnap raises his eyebrows challengingly at Karl who is bubbling with laughter. Anyone else would probably be intimidated, but Karl knows better and so he flicks droplets of water right onto Sapnap’s face. What happens next is a blur. Sapnap lunges for Karl, dragging him by the waist until they’re halfway into the deep end of the pool.

“Are you seriously wearing a hat?” George asks Alex, raising an eyebrow and reaching out to flick the lid. “It’s gonna get ruined.”

“It’s just water,” Alex replies. He remains stoic and nonchalant, seemingly in thought as he

watches Karl and Sapnap from a distance.

George backhands water all over Alex's face, making sure to wet his cap as well, "There's chemicals too. I suggest you take it off."

"Dick," Alex laughs, wiping the water off his face, but surrendering and tugging the accessory off his head. He throws it a few feet away from them, hitting one of the outdoor seating chairs and then turns his attention to his attacker. "I'm giving you one last second to apologize."

"Yeah? Or what?"

Soon, Dream is watching not one but two pairs of idiots dance around, trying their best to dunk their partner into the water. Dream chuckles behind his fist and remains relaxed by the edge of the pool.

His legs are in the water, soaked up to his calves, and he's hunched over enough to see his reflection gaze back up at him. Ripples rift through the surface from the activities of his friends, but when Dream looks up to investigate and sees George smiling at him, the only trembles he can acknowledge are of his own heart.

"Join us," George invites and Alex stops trying to throw him into the water for a second to agree. "You look so lonely up there."

"Not to mention creepy," Alex huffs. "Tall, lanky *creature* hunched over like that."

In retaliation, Dream makes sure to swing his arm extra hard when he jumps into the water, sending a tidal wave in Alex's direction. Alex doesn't scream, only grimaces, dragging one hand down his face. Dream grins at him and reaches out to ruffle his wet hair, only to be pushed away instantly. Before Alex can say anything to him though, an unsuspecting Karl loops an arm around the man's shoulders and pulls him away.

"Having fun?"

Dream turns around to face George, breath catching in his throat at the view. George is standing there with his hands in his hair—hair that's wet and clinging to his forehead, reminiscent of how it looked during his cooking stream. There's beads of water rolling down the sides of his face,

kissing his jawline, clinging to his collarbones-

“Yeah,” Dream manages to say, swimming over to the edge of the pool again so that he can rest his back against it. “It’s refreshing.”

“Much needed, I think,” George laughs, moving next to Dream. Dream tries not to think about their bare skin touching when George nudges his shoulder with his own.

“In Florida, I sit in my swimming pool all the time,” Dream mutters, dancing his fingertips along the water. “It saves me from the heat and it helps me calm down sometimes.”

“Spoken like a true Florida man,” George teases and Dream feels a sudden weight on his left shoulder. It’s George’s head. “I’m not a big fan of pools.”

Dream suppresses a laugh and it comes out as an airy scoff, “Didn’t you used to do swimming as a sport?”

“Barely,” George yawns, going slack and shifting almost all his weight onto Dream. The water helps some, but Dream finds himself securing an arm around George’s waist anyway, keeping him propped up against him. “Hot tubs are nice though.”

Dream can hear the annoying smirk on George’s face without even having to glance down at him, “You’re such an idiot.”

The sun has set by now and the only thing illuminating the backyard is the lamp hanging above the door frame and the glimmer of moonlight that peeks through the clouds. It’s a shame that the stars are hiding.

“How was your first kiss, though? I’ve been meaning to ask.”

Finally, Dream spares a glance at George and in doing so he sees the fragments of light that swirl around hypnotically in two welcoming pits of darkness. The stars of the night sky have found home in George’s eyes.

“Guys!” Sapnap interrupts, having to take large strides over due to the resistance that the water builds up against his legs. “We’re gonna set up for my stream. It’s facecam though, so no pressure to join.”

He’s asking George, not even bothering to look at Dream for a second. It’s because he respects Dream’s boundaries and nothing more, but of course Dream reads into it and can’t help but tighten his grip on George’s hip.

“Uh,” George lifts his head off of Dream’s shoulder. “I think I’ll pass.” His eyes shift from Sapnap to Dream then back to Sapnap, “I’m feeling a little tired.”

“Alright!” Sapnap chirps, moving past them so that he can hoist himself up and out of the pool. “You can just say you’re keeping Dream company though.”

Dream rubs the nape of his neck sheepishly. Guilt weighs down on him as he reasons out that George has missed out on so many events during their time here only because he doesn’t want Dream to feel left out. If Dream could just get over these suffocating obstacles of fear and insecurity, then—

George’s hand rests on top of Dream’s, fingers slipping in between the gaps, and Dream softens his touch, no longer painting new bruises on George’s skin.

“It’s a bit of both,” George admits as Sapnap flashes them a smile and the youngest of the three then points at the towels that he’s left out for the other two. “Thanks, Sap!”

Karl and Alex stay for a while longer as Sapnap prepares his stream, making a stupid bet on who can float the longest, until Dream reminds them that they should take a shower before making their appearance. Karl is the first to race out of the pool, too concerned over not looking his best in front of their fans, while Alex stays a second longer out of stubbornness to win the forgotten bet.

“Hair reveal today?” Dream jokes as Alex runs a hand through his wet hair and then climbs out of the pool. Alex shakes his head with a grin, putting his cap back on despite Dream and George advising him not to, and then he leaves with his middle fingers stuck out at them.

“He’s,” Dream begins, not knowing what to say and simply trailing off.

“Unique,” George finishes with an affectionate roll of his eyes. Their laughs mingle. “You never answered my question, by the way.” Before Dream can ask for clarification, George provides it, “I asked you how your first kiss went.”

“Because we were interrupted,” Dream defends weakly and then he adds, “And you *know* the story. Nickelodeon Resort, hot tub, 13th birthday? Pretty hard to forget.”

“Oh we *know* how extravagant your life is, Dream, we know,” George butts in. “First kiss at thirteen with a pretty face at a themed water park.”

Dream smiles at George who folds his arms over his chest and turns his head to the side just to be petty. (He also mourns the loss of his touch). It’s not cold but the occasional breezes still irritate George’s cheeks with pink blemishes.

“They weren’t that pretty. I’ve seen prettier.”

“Whatever,” George scowls, moving a hand up to brush away the water that’s hanging from the ends of his fringe. “Tell me how you felt. Fireworks and all that.”

“No fireworks,” Dream says straight off the bat. Maybe there had been a few, but they were tiny sparks, nothing compared to the overwhelming show that took off when he was kissing George. “It was strange because I had never done it before, but it wasn’t mind blowing.”

“I find that hard to believe,” George argues, moving so that he’s standing in front of Dream now. With Dream leaning back against the ledge, knees bent and posture slacking, their height difference isn’t as apparent.

“And why is that?” Dream replies with an eyebrow raised in interest, one of his hands running through his hair and then stopping at the back of his neck.

With a scoff of disbelief, George pushes himself closer, voice barely above a whisper as if they weren’t the only two within the vicinity. “You’re telling me you didn’t like them? Didn’t feel anything for them?”

Not in the way I feel for you. “No,” Dream shakes his head, training his gaze on his broken reflection in the water. “They turned out to be a shitty person, so. If anything, I was robbed of my

first kiss and I guess I deserved it since I ended up robbing yours in the future.”

It’s meant to be a joke, but George’s hands curl over Dream’s shoulders and Dream can barely steady himself before George uses his new leverage to knock their foreheads together gently. “You didn’t rob me of my first kiss,” George mumbles, a small frown etched onto his face, “I gave it to you.”

“George, what are you-”

“It’s a bad memory for you, isn’t it?” The smaller man asks, tilting his head so that their mouths are inches away from one another. Dream is too distracted by the movement of George’s plump lips to come up with a coherent response. “Let me change that.”

To say that this kiss feels different from Dream’s first is an understatement. George erases the faint traces that the blurred face had left, using his lips as a medium to rewrite old memories into new ones. Dream relives the scene all those years ago, except the heat that consumes him isn’t from the water, it’s from George who has pressed himself against him. The cheers in the background are silenced and replaced by the dull buzz of the night, the butterflies from his puppy love are now soaring to new heights in the wake of an emotion that drills much deeper. His hands are not stiff and idle as they were back then, instead roaming and feeling as much as he can.

“Better?” George asks when they pull away for air with a gasp. Dream stares at him, stunned to silence. “Forget their name,” George continues, nuzzling the tip of his nose against Dream’s in a fashion much gentler than he’s ever been before. “Replace it with mine.”

Water splashes against Dream’s chest when George moves to lower himself and Dream raises a hand to rest on the small of George’s back, unsure of what the brunette is getting at until he feels a pair of lips trail sloppy kisses down the expanse of his neck. Every now and then, George bares his teeth, nibbling on soft skin and then rolling his tongue over it. Dream’s breaths grow heavy and he drags George even closer, if possible, which is truly the worst miscalculation he could’ve possibly managed. George’s legs slot over one of Dream’s thighs, hips almost pressed flush against Dream’s, and he’s too focused on his task at hand — lapping over burning skin — to notice that Dream has gone rigid underneath him.

Dream wills himself not to think too deeply. He stares at the clouds above, trying to find shapes in an effort to distract himself so that he doesn’t think about the way George’s lips drag up and down his neck. George’s licks are short and shallow, like small laps to clean up the ‘mess’ he’s made. It’s a one-way ticket down the gutter for Dream, his mind immediately forcing him to think about where else the ministrations of such a tease could go.

“George,” he warns, moving his hands down to rest on the eager man’s hips. George responds with a noncommittal hum, breath hitting the junction where Dream’s neck meets his shoulder. “Let’s go back inside, c’mon.”

Dream makes a move to stand up, but George slides one of his hands down, pressing firmly against Dream’s chest. “Not yet,” he orders and Dream finds himself giving up without a fight. George’s teeth sink into his skin once again, this time being a lot harsher than the ones before, and Dream hisses at the feeling. He thinks the skin might tear—or maybe that’s George’s nails digging into his back—he can’t really discern anything with his mind fogged up.

“Done,” George says with a satisfied smile, pulling away and skirting his fingers over the prominent mark that he’s left. “Payback.” Dream makes another effort to move, but George applies pressure onto the budding bruise and Dream shudders, a jolt of pain shooting up his spine. However, the feeling is not unwelcome.

Nothing ever is when it comes to George.

“You’re shaking,” George sneers, pulling away his hand so that he can tap Dream on the nose instead. “Does it hurt, Dreamie? Need a kiss for your boo-boo?”

With his hands still positioned at George’s hips, Dream effortlessly picks him up and turns them around. Startled into action, George reaches out to hold onto Dream’s arms, but Dream twirls George around until his stomach roughly collides with the edge of the pool.

“Sorry, what was that?” Dream asks smugly, his lips a hair’s breadth away from the tip of George’s ear. George makes a mistake in judgement and reaches behind him to push Dream away but Dream catches both his wrists with one hand, keeping them pinned behind his back.

“Fuck you,” George says through gritted teeth. Dream retaliates by applying pressure on George’s back, forcing the shorter man to bend down over the ledge until his chest is hovering mere inches above the concrete floor.

His hips press against George’s in the process and a shudder runs down George’s back. At first Dream freezes, thinking he’s made George uncomfortable, but then George stops fighting, glancing over his shoulder to glare at Dream with no spite, just shyness and embarrassment. Dream feels a dangerous fire igniting in the pit of his stomach.

“I’m shaking? Is that what you said?” Dream wets his lips with his tongue and then sinks his teeth onto his bottom lip. “You’re cute.”

There’s a small jolt of resistance from George again, probably from his ego begging for protection after the consistent humiliation. Yet it’s to no avail. They’ve learned from day one that Dream is stronger—that Dream can hold him down with one hand, just like this.

“Funny how things end up when you have a big mouth, don’t you think, princess?”

Dream’s eyes move down to the orchids coloring George’s neck from their earlier session and he leans in, pressing kisses over the marks he’s made. George inhales sharply, clearly anticipating more, but Dream knows his own body too well to give in. Any more and the tightening of his trunks might become a problem big enough to demand an awkward explanation from Dream.

He pulls away and George hesitantly turns around, focusing on something off to the side before looking up at Dream. There’s an unrecognizable spark in his eyes that confuses Dream; in all the times that they’ve ‘fooled’ around so far, George has never stared at him like this.

“Was that supposed to scare me?”

Dream laughs and plays off the question with a shrug. When George doesn’t pry further, Dream pushes himself out of the pool and extends a hand to help George. “Let’s go inside, it’s getting cold.”

“Whatever,” George replies, taking Dream’s hand and allowing the blonde to assist him in climbing out. Wind blows past them and Dream watches the goosebumps appear along George’s arms. “It’s cold.”

“I hear you loud and clear, your highness,” Dream teases, grabbing a towel and waiting expectantly. “Come here.”

What feels like a minute of a silent staring contest passes by and then George takes the tiniest step forward. Dream knows better than to expect more from him so he closes the distance between them instead. He dries George’s hair first, obnoxiously being harsher than he needs to until George punches him lightly on the chest for it, and then begins patting down George’s exposed torso. He tries not to look at how George’s trunks hang threateningly low on his hips, but his eyes betray him and do something worse. They occupy themselves by staring at the droplet of water that runs down

George's neck and over the pretty bruises, brewing even more trouble for Dream.

"You don't have to do this," George grumbles, but makes no actual protest.

Dream continues brushing the towel over George's body until he's satisfied with his work, "No big deal." He drapes the cloth over George's shoulder and then nudges his head to the door, gesturing for him to go inside, while he dries himself off.

"I'll wait for you," George shrugs, rocking back and forth on his feet as he watches Dream hastily wipe away the water clinging to his chest. "It's dangerous to be outside this late at night, especially all alone. I'll protect you."

Dream stifles a laugh at that, tossing his towel around the back of his neck once he's finished drying off. George promptly turns around and walks over to the backdoor that leads into the house while Dream watches him silently. When George is inside, he turns around, waiting for Dream with an outstretched hand and a ghost of a smile on his face. Dream will never be able to put into words how beautiful he is.

"Trust me," Dream sighs.

"You don't have to teach me about danger."

Chapter End Notes

Hi, everyone!

Sorry for the late update, I've had a fairly busy month and I didn't have enough time that I could allocate for writing. I usually spend a lot of time on these chapters so rushing it wouldn't have been ideal. To put things into perspective, if I were to use size 12 Times Roman font in single space, this chapter alone would be 18 pages. Holy smokes!

Anyway, I hope everyone has been well! I genuinely appreciate the comments. They keep me motivated. :']

I have also made a [twitter](#) for updates on this fic. I will also be discussing other works there or simply brainrotting! Join me! (I've already started a few wips that I'm excited to finish.)

For those of you that may not be able to click the link, my @ is simply seryters! Same

as it is on here.

Thank you for sticking around and see you on twitter or on the next update!

Black Strings

Chapter Summary

And if it's freedom that Dream desires, his first move should be to cut the black thread of fate that confines him.

Chapter Notes

Again, rated E for Explicit and not E for Everyone. I apologize for this chapter because: one, I cannot write explicit scenes for the life of me, and two, almost this entire chapter is explicit because I had to split it somehow (it was getting too long).

-

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Even when things seem to turn up for the better, happiness is subjective.

On the outside, everything is fine. The group's dynamic goes back to how it was and nobody really bats an eye at George and Dream's endeavors. Sometimes, George will tug Dream down using the collar of his shirt and paste a sweet kiss on his lips, just for the thrill of it. Other times, Dream will turn his head and—in a moment of weakness, when the need to dote on George overwhelms him—kiss the brunette on the forehead. At most, they'll receive a teasing comment meant to bruise their ego, but usually, nothing falls out of the norm.

That's what makes it so dangerous.

Dream can't trick himself into thinking that this is going to last forever because it isn't. He can't get used to the not-so-secret kisses they steal from each other every now and then, he can't learn a habit of tucking George in bed and carding his fingers through his soft tangled locks, he can't find a stable routine that revolves around accommodating George's wants and needs. So, really when you dive any deeper than the surface level, you unravel the chaos that's slowly ensuing underneath.

From afar, the image is nothing short of perfect; from up close, you see the cracks as the paint chips away. To be perfect is to live with a facade and George had waltzed right into Dream's heart

when he had thought his mask was enough.

“Maybe the mask has gotta go.”

The room falls dead silent when Dream speaks. One by one, heads turn towards him as he remains sat on the couch.

Alex stops tuning Karl’s guitar, Karl turns around in his chair, Sapnap looks up from his phone, and George..

George tilts his head up from where it rests on Dream’s shoulder, his hand tightening around Dream’s in an attempt to stop the younger man from trembling. His eyebrows are furrowed and his lips are pursed into a thin line, worry written from left to right on his countenance.

“I’ve been thinking,” Dream elaborates, trying not to be distracted by the way George uses his free hand to gently caress his thigh. “I said I was gonna do a face reveal when George got here and during something memorable. This.. this is that moment.”

“Are you sure, dude?” Sapnap asks, pocketing his phone and giving Dream his undivided attention. Alex and Karl draw their chairs closer, nodding in agreement to Sapnap’s next words, “You don’t have to feel pressured to, but we’ll support you no matter what you decide.”

“I’m sure,” Dream asserts, smiling a bit shyly as he scratches the nape of his neck with his unoccupied hand. “I wanna go out and explore the city without worrying all the time. I wanna make stupid videos with you guys and do random streams. I wanna,” Dream pauses, closing his eyes for a second or two. The ticks of the clock are even louder than before and each whistle of the wind slices through the thick silence.

“I wanna feel free.”

Everyone remains quiet, processing Dream’s confession. There are affectionate grins drawn on their faces, but nobody has the proper words to say just yet. Excitement brews within the circle, ready to overflow, and Karl is the one to tip the bucket over.

“That’s great! This is gonna be so sick,” Karl exclaims, jumping onto his feet and raising a fist in the air. When Alex stands up with just as much enthusiasm, the two of them share a quick high-

five and giggle with exaggeration before turning their attention back to Dream. “How are you gonna do it?”

“On a stream, probably,” Dream mumbles offhandedly, too unnerved by the anxiety that lightly knocks on his chest, begging to be let in. “Today? Tomorrow? The sooner, the better. We don’t have much of this trip left.”

“Dream,” George calls out, his tone sounding as it does when he reprimands Cat for knocking over the items on his desk. “Are you sure you’re not just being impulsive?” He’s able to ask the questions that the others can’t. They’re all way too afraid of being disrespectful, even Sapnap who has known him longest, but George has never been shy of saying what’s on his mind. He’s blunt and rational and he gives Dream the ground he needs. “I don’t want you to regret it later. Think this thoroughly okay?”

“Yeah, man, and you know you guys are welcome to stay as long as you’d like,” Karl adds on, snapping his fingers and then giving Dream two thumbs up.

Dream licks his lips and then reasserts, “I’m sure.” The act of slight hesitancy doesn’t go unnoticed by George who gives him a look that says that this conversation is definitely not over.

“Well, let us know when you decide on a date.” Alex asks with genuine curiosity, the smile having yet to vanish from his face. “Just so none of us plan anything that day.”

Sapnap nods in agreement, “Yeah. That day is all yours, man. Own it.”

“Okay, tomorrow, then,” Dream surprises himself with his own announcement and the others widen their eyes to relay the same shock.

George stirs beside him, “Surely not.” The hand on Dream’s thigh is gone as George pushes himself into an upright position, turning to face Dream with a stern look on his face. “It’s too fast, too soon. Are you actually thinking about doing this?”

Dream frowns at that, angling himself so that he’s eye to eye with George. “Yeah, I am,” he says, trying his best not to shake like a leaf. He’ll never be able to beguile George; George knows him too well. Yet, he still makes the attempt, facial features hardening to show that he’s serious. “Why are you so against it? Against me?”

“I don’t think he meant it like that,” Sapnap tries to butt in, laughing nervously as his best friends glare at each other (still hand in hand).

“I’m not against you!” George replies, tilting his head to the side in disbelief afterwards. “I’m your best friend, Dream. I’ve seen you do this before! You make decisions out of nowhere and then later, you wallow in self-pity for days.”

“Why do you care so much?” Dream bites, the words feeling sour and foreign on his tongue. “I want to do it. It’s important to me, isn’t that all that matters?”

“Yeah, that’s exactly why I care so much, you fucking prick!”

George throws his hands in the air in exasperation, leaving Dream’s hand forgotten. Dream tenses at George’s yelling, which Sapnap picks up on, causing the younger man to reach out and place a hand on George’s shoulder. The brunette is too heated, retaliating by shrugging the hand off and whipping his head around to warn anybody else from intervening.

“Don’t coddle him,” George says, pointing an accusatory finger at Sapnap, but the statement goes for everyone in the room. When he returns his attention to Dream, he’s fueled by even more anger than before. “Do you think I don’t want you to do a face reveal? I’ve been waiting for years, Dream. For years!”

Dream parts his lips to reply, an apology ready to leave him, but George raises a hand to stop him from talking. “No, don’t you dare start with me. I’m not done.” An arm flies out to gesture at the other three men that loiter awkwardly at the side, trying their best not to be involved but to no avail. “Do you think we don’t want to go outside with you? To go to stupid fancy restaurants, arcades, the city, even the park down the block?”

“That’s not what I was saying, George,” Dream tries, but George presses his tongue against the inside of his cheek and scoffs, rolling his eyes in annoyance.

“Do you know how many times I’ve wanted to post a photo of you facetimeing me on twitter? When you’ve got a lazy eye and ridiculous bed hair, but you still call me because you had this crazy dream or because you just want to talk. I want to show people that side of you, that side that you always bury because you think you have to be this.. this cool, tough guy on the internet that rarely allows himself to just be stupid. To act your age instead of worrying about setting an example for everyone about everything. Defending people who could give less than two shits about you because you’d rather carry the hate by yourself. I want you to be free, I want us to be free!”

“Hey, maybe we should just-”

“No!” George shouts when Alex tries to calm him down and his voice cracks near the end, the anger morphing to genuine hurt. It’s only then that they realize George is tearing up and because he’s someone that rarely shows his emotions, it shocks everyone else in the room to silence. “I’ve waited so fucking long for you to be comfortable enough to show the world who you really are and I’m not just talking about your stupid face! You’re attractive, you *know* you’re attractive, that’s never been the issue, has it?”

Dream doesn’t reply. He doesn’t need to.

“You’re afraid that once you show the world what you look like, that line you’ve drawn between Dream and Clay is going to vanish.”

Footsteps shuffle behind them and Dream discerns Karl’s voice, ushering the others to leave the living room because they’re “probably not supposed to hear this”. The door to Karl’s room locks shut after a few seconds and there’s the faint hum of a computer being turned on, but the only reason Dream is able to focus on that is because George has stopped talking.

However, the silence doesn’t stay for long.

“You’re never going to realize, are you?” George asks, roughly wiping his tears away with the back of his hands. Those hands then come up to cup each side of Dream’s face. “They’re both you. Clay, Dream, it doesn’t matter. They’re you and you’re,” George pauses. “You’re brilliant. You don’t need to change, none of your real fans are going to leave you if you show them who you really are.”

“It’s okay to take your time, it’s okay to be scared,” George whispers. Dream places his own hands over George’s and the brunette smiles like he’s about to break. “I’m scared too. I hate that some *losers* are going to judge you, but they’ve always done that and they always will. They’re jealous, it’s just how it is.” George’s fingers spread just enough for Dream’s to fall in between the gaps. “I know how you get when you make impulsive decisions, so I need you to be a hundred percent sure that this is what you want to do.”

“As long as I have you, I’m okay,” Dream says because it’s true. He presses his forehead onto George’s, letting shy whispers fan across rosy lips. “I have you, right, Georgie?” The question is meant to sound teasing because really, the answer should be obvious, but Dream is still scared and

it shows in the way his gaze falters.

“Always,” George reassures. “You’ll always have me. I’m not going anywhere, Clay.”

The strings that have winded around Dream’s heart tighten, causing sorrowful bleeding. A question that rings in Dream’s head remains unsaid.

But would you let me have you in all the ways I want to?

“You know,” George continues when Dream refuses to trust his voice. “It’s sad that they’ll never see you the way I do.” His smile is fond and tears no longer kiss his beautifully long lashes.

Dream squeezes his friend’s hands gently, “Yeah? In what way is that?”

It’s both expected and unexpected. George leaning in to kiss him has happened too many times for Dream to not meet him halfway, but at the same time, this territory they’re encroaching on is unknown to either of them. Their lips move slow and unsteady, similar to their first kiss, but this time, George is the one guiding them. He lets it remain soft and sweet for a few seconds and then he’s diving teeth-first, bruising Dream’s lips with no remorse.

“Not here,” Dream reminds George of their surroundings, but he doesn’t stop the latter when he dives in again, tongue prying Dream’s pliant lips apart. A gasp falls from Dream’s lips at George’s brash intrusion, but right before he gets a lapful of a pretty boy that can’t keep his hands to himself, he pulls away.

George whines, high and needy, and Dream is in awe that he can sound so desperate. “George,” he repeats, this time more sternly so that the smaller man stops chasing after his lips. “I said not here.”

With a huff, the brunette stands up, fists at his sides as he glares at Dream expectantly and then stomps off to their bedroom. Dream watches him in slight disbelief before chuckling and following after him. He spares a glance at Karl’s door and then climbs up the stairs. (He swears he sees the lock on the knob turn shut.)

When Dream reaches the bedroom, George is sitting on the edge of the bed and looking as bored as he can manage, almost challenging Dream to do something.

“You’re selfish, you know that?” Dream scoffs, kicking the door shut behind him and not bothering to lock it. “We’re having a serious, heart-to-heart conversation and then you decide to make it all about you.”

“Not true,” George argues, but whatever insult he has ready dies on his lips when Dream turns around to meet his gaze.

The blonde lowers his eyebrows, leaving no room for argument, and then leans back against the closed door. “Really? So I don’t have to give you what you want?” One of his hands reaches down behind him to twist the doorknob. “I can leave right now, is that what you’re saying?”

Dream’s bluffing, of course he’s bluffing. He would do anything to satiate George’s hunger, but for the sake of the game they’re playing at (and their friendship), George doesn’t need to know that.

“Dream,” George calls out in desperation, leaning forward as if he’s drawn to him like a magnet. “Stop that.”

It’s meant to be a demand, but with the way he reeks of desire, it sounds more like a plea. Dream coos at the sight, arrogant and condescending, and walks over until he’s standing at the foot of the bed. George glances up at him, wide eyes unsuspecting and vulnerable, even when Dream grips at his jaw and forces it open.

“That easy?” Dream marvels at the way George’s mouth falls open from the slightest pressure of his fingers. George’s breath is hot, hitting the palm of his hand. “Poor baby. Do you even know what you’re asking for?”

The ideas that run through Dream’s mind are endless, but he settles for the safest option. He hunches over, bent knee pressed between George’s thighs, and brushes their lips together. His touch is light and teasing, a clear juxtaposition to the hold he has on George’s face, and when the dazed man tries to lean in, he yanks him away.

“Easy there, pup,” Dream laughs in awe of what George has turned into. If he had been anyone else and was told that George hadn’t done so much as kiss someone before all of this, he definitely would not have believed them. “Use your words for me. Can you do that, pretty?”

The noticeable lilt to his voice disappears once he drops an octave, no longer speaking loud enough

for anyone but the two of them to hear. His left hand forms a fist in the chocolate locks, tugging enough to elicit a proper moan from George who flushes red upon hearing himself. But the compliance doesn't last long.

George groans in frustration, "Fuck you," and there's a pause between his sentences from shyness. "Just kiss me already."

Dream raises an eyebrow at the change in behavior and can't help the cocky smirk that tugs on his lips. "That's not nice, Georgie," he chides, lightly slapping George's cheek twice before pulling his hand away and rising to his full height. "Why don't you try asking me politely?"

"Fine, I'll just go ask Sapnap."

George moves to stand, but Dream is quicker. He immediately shoves the smaller man with enough force to send him falling back onto the bed and then clambers on top of him. Large hands pin tiny wrists and lips clash hard enough to bruise. Dream wastes no time, licking into George's mouth with reckless abandon, and George has the nerve to let out a satisfied giggle that gets drowned into the kiss.

When they pull away, breaths heavy as they try to regain air into their lungs, Dream speaks through gritted teeth. "You're such a fucking *brat*," he hisses with narrowed eyes. "You couldn't just ask nicely, could you? You're so desperate to be kissed, you'd ask anyone."

'Kissed' is beginning to sound a lot like a substitute for another verb, but Dream won't touch upon that.

Underneath him, George writhes, clearly craving more, but not defining what 'more' really is. Sweat plasters his bangs to his forehead and his dark freckles stand out on his cherry apple cheeks. Dream takes in the sight before him before leaning in again, teeth tugging the brit's lower lip before letting it snap back into place.

"All that talk about being scared they'd make fun of you," Dream mumbles, maneuvering skillfully so that both of George's wrists are held above his head with one hand, leaving the other to do as it pleases. "What a joke. You're too needy to care."

"Dream, please," George whines, wiggling his arms in a silent request for them to be let go. Dream spares him, using his forearm to hoist himself up just enough so that he's hovering over George

instead of crushing him. George's cold hands venture underneath the taller man's shirt and steal the heat off of his body, leaving invisible imprints that will haunt Dream for days to come.

Dream's right hand curls around the base of George's neck, fingers stretching along the column snugly. It fits like an accessory and it's arguably one of the best the latter has worn yet, second only to the hickies Dream has left and plans to continue leaving.

"You can do better than that, princess. *Beg.* "

A strangled noise leaves George as he tries to form a coherent sentence, his pent up frustration nearly drawing tears. Dream almost feels bad. Almost. But he reminds himself that if George wanted, his tongue was quick and witty remarks were clearly his forte. So, if anything, his silence was only another stroke to Dream's hungry ego.

"Please kiss me, Dream. Please, I want it—need it so bad." George's whimper dies in his throat and Dream feels the vibrations against his palm. "Need *you* so bad, Dream, *please.* "

For a second, Dream forgets where they stand. For a second, the lines blur and Dream confuses George needing something, anything, for truly needing *him*.

And it feels amazing.

"Oh? What about Sapnap?" The taller man sneers, having too much fun being the cause of George's breathless gasps. His fingers tighten around George's neck and he presses his thumb against the pulsing vein to feel the man's heart rate quicken drastically. While the moment lasts, Dream will allow himself to enjoy this ignorant bliss.

"Didn't mean it," George replies, one hand tugging on Dream's shirt and the other clawing at the latter's abdomen. He lifts his legs up and cages Dream between his thighs, keeping him at bay as if the man had half the braincell to think about going anywhere else. "Just you- only you."

Dream keeps the pressure on George's throat for a second longer, loving the way the brunette looks with his eyes rolled back and lips parted, glistening with spit. It's unbelievably hot and Dream is more than aware that this memory will stick with him for ages. Like a broken record, replaying over and over again, pushing Dream to new heights when reaching that blinding whiteness.

The hand Dream had previously placed above George's head slides down to his jaw, thumb hooking into the side of his inviting mouth to open it wider. The heat that engulfs Dream's finger is instant and suffocating, almost vice-like with the intention of having Dream yearn.

"You gonna be a good boy for me, baby?"

And George nods, so eager to please and so clouded with something that dangerously borders lust. Dream can't help but shove his tongue into the warm cavern, curling it around George's and then flicking the slick roof. There's no battle for dominance; George is lax and Dream is ignited.

"Only for me?" Dream asks again, his lips sloppily pressing words onto George's, who can only manage pitched hums in response.

It's only when George hoists his lower half, pressing it firmly against Dream's, that Dream realizes the trouble he's got himself into. He's sure that George can feel how hard he's become, erection straining against his sweats, but to his surprise, George doesn't seem to mind.

In fact, he shares a similar problem, one that he tries to solve by rutting his hips against Dream's.

It's too good to be real and Dream almost thinks he's hallucinating, but even in the waves of pleasure, he gathers his last drops of self restraint and pulls back to ask for permission. George breaks like a dam, tears falling down the hills of his cheeks, and the way he's sobbing makes Dream feel so cruel.

(It also turns him on an insane amount.)

"George, are you okay?"

Dream watches as George fights off his impure haze to answer him, although the lewd expression on his face remains. "I- yeah, fine."

George is carefully hoisted up higher on the bed until his head gently lands on the soft pillows by the headboard. The pillows are a pale shade of blue, which matches him perfectly in Dream's opinion, and he tugs one down to hold onto after pulling his hands out from under Dream's shirt. Dream sits on his knees, straightening his back and keeping his fingers latched onto George's hips while the other man's thighs remain spread out for him. He looks down at George, trying his best

to memorize the way he's laid out for him (and him alone), and then experimentally rolls his hips.

George's breath hitches.

"What do you want?" Dream asks, his thumbs rubbing reassuring circles onto George's skin. His next breath gets punched out of him when George tries to answer by arching his back and angling himself so that their crotches press against each other again.

There's nothing that Dream wants to do more than to push George's head against the pillows and fuck him into the bed, uncaring if their friends hear them from downstairs. He wants to force out all the pretty noises George can manage, leave reminders of their sins over each expanse of skin that he sees, and have him squirming because he's never felt pleasure like this before. He wants George to come crawling back for more.

But he needs to make sure that George wants this as much as he does.

Dream pulls his hips away, ignoring the shaky whine that leaves George, and speaks with a low, rigid voice. "Words, baby."

George's lips move, mouthing sentences that fall just short of being audible, and he's so out of it that drool dribbles down his chin, tainting the pillow in his arms. His head lolls, cheek squishing against the cushion, and he looks up at Dream with those wide doe eyes of his that practically scream at Dream to ruin him.

The lack of action speaks for itself and George forces himself to talk louder upon realizing that Dream can't hear him. "Touch me," he sighs, grabbing onto one of Dream's hands and dragging it underneath his shirt before guiding it higher and higher. The hem of his shirt bunches by Dream's wrist until the majority of his upper torso is bare and visible. "Here, everywhere, just touch me."

Alarm bells ring in Dream's head and red flags shoot up left and right. But Dream is too far gone by now with his palm resting right above George's chest, whose pupils are blown wide open with nothing but lust.

"You said you would teach me," George speaks with a prominent pout, words coming out slightly slurred, and his gaze flickers down to where Dream's hand remains idle, fingers just inches away from brushing over his nipple.

Dream traces his line of sight and despite every sane part of his mind left telling him to walk out of the room, he rolls the perky nub between his thumb and index finger. Heaven is far from the Hell Dream has made for himself, but George looks like an angel and the wanton moan he lets out to is far more beautiful than any hymn.

He's also very sensitive. So long as Dream's fingers keep tweaking his nipple, shudders continue raking through his body, and when Dream alternates, pinching the neglected bud instead, George turns into a whimpering mess that can only manage raspy pleas. He tries to grind himself against Dream, cock aching for some sort of attention, but his legs give in half way and he collapses on the bed, hopelessly unsatisfied.

Dream snickers at the sight, adoring just how dependent George has become on him. He shifts closer, pressing their crotches together and giving them their much needed friction, and then pauses, resisting the urge to strip away the thin layers that separate them. There's still a game to be played after all.

"Is there something you want to ask me for, princess?"

George's eyes are lidded and his long lashes are already home to unshed tears. For someone who makes a big deal about closeting his emotions, it's astonishing how easily he cries. Unsurprisingly, Dream wants to know just how *much* he can make George cry; from pleasure, of course. He can already imagine the choked sobs and the damp pillows and *fuck*, George is so *pretty*.

"Make me cum."

He's expecting a hesitant, yet obscene response from George. So when the brunette looks up at him and says *that*, suddenly uncaring of the humiliation Dream is trying to dawn on him, Dream's weak grip on restraint finally slips. His only thought left is to please George, to make him shake in ecstasy, to give him the heaven he was robbed of.

Everything is a blur, from Dream tugging his shirt off and tossing it over his shoulder to helping George do the same and then baring his teeth at the soft flesh of the junction where George's neck meets his shoulder. The bruises from last time have yet to go away, but Dream decides that he won't let them disappear. His teeth sink in harshly, lips and tongue working to soothe the affected area after, and he works diligently to darken all the fading colors.

"The door," George gasps, but the way he's acting pushes any sense of reason far out of Dream's reach. He has one hand fisted in the taller man's hair, tugging on golden strands, and the other scratching down his tanned back, nails sure to leave marks. The possibility of being walked in on

is the last thing on either of their minds.

With one last, hostile bite, Dream flips them over. He sits George on top of his lap and pushes himself off the bed to wrap his arms around his friend's (the title is bitter in his mind) thin waist. Their next kiss is sloppy, mouths nearly missing and spit lathering over their lips. It's hard for them to find a proper rhythm and part of that is because George is more focused on grinding himself against Dream's hardening dick, getting increasingly frustrated because of the clothes in between.

Dream pulls away to admire how tainted George has become, rutting against him so pathetically, like a bitch in heat. He watches George's mouth fall open and hears the hiccuped gasps that leave him. He's so *broken* from such minimal friction and that has Dream wondering just how wrecked he can get George to sound.

He leans away, nestling his back against the pillows that decorate the top of the bed, and moves one hand up to caress George's cheek. "Are you sure you want this?"

George's hand reaches up to grab Dream's wrist, tugging it away from his face and shyly placing it on his lap instead, before rejoining his other one on the exposed skin of Dream's stomach. Being a gamer for over ten years doesn't call for much of a workout, but Dream has always taken good care of his body and the extra effort is definitely paying off now as George worships him wordlessly.

"I trust you."

Dream's fingers dive straight past the waistband of George's sweats, hooking into the hem of his briefs before looking up at George for one last sign of permission and exhaling in relief at the sight of encouraging round eyes. When he finally tugs the material down, he hears the man above him sigh quietly in relief and his dick springs free, lightly hitting his stomach.

He doesn't mean to stare, really, but he can't help it. The upper half is flushed pink, drops of precum already gathering at the tip from just how aroused George is, and when Dream rolls his hips upwards, it *twitches*.

George moves his arms, trying to hide himself from Dream's burning gaze. "Quit staring."

That elicits a fond chortle from Dream who nudges George's arms apart again and wiggles a hand between them, carefully fisting the weeping erection. Above him, George gasps and his eyes flutter

shut once more. It encourages Dream to move his hand, although it practically already covers the entirety of George's cock. He thumbs the slit, collecting the wetness there and then lathering it down the side whilst absentmindedly tracing the veins.

"Can't help it," Dream murmurs, rapidly flickering between watching the ministrations of his hand and admiring the expressions George makes in bliss. "Everything about you is so *beautiful*."

And George folds like a leaf, panting exasperatedly near the side of Dream's face as a shudder runs through his body. His hands slide up to curl over his best friend's broad shoulders, trying to find some sense of stability when he begins to slowly thrust up into Dream's loose fist.

"You like that?" Dream asks, turning his head so that his lips kiss the tip of George's ear. "You like being called beautiful?"

He twists his fist experimentally, smirking when George chokes out a moan, and then tightens his grip to provide that extra bit of friction. "What else do you like being called, hm?"

George shakes his head, but Dream can't tell if that's from him answering the question or from him losing himself to the heat that's consuming the both of them. The movement of his hips has grown more frantic and Dream's own cock twitches at the way George unknowingly grinds his ass down against him.

"Angel? Doll?" Dream suggests, pumping George along to the rhythm the smaller man has set which has George mewling miserably. "Kitten?"

He can tell George is getting close by the way his thrusts have grown sloppy. So, like the devil incarnate that he is, he stops moving his fist and grabs George's hip with his other hand, halting his actions as well. George pulls back to stare at him with a quivering pout and tear stains on his cheeks.

"Dreamie," he huffs, weakly trying to buck into Dream's hand, but Dream's clasp on his hip is unrelenting.

"Yes, baby?"

Again, he tries to move and find pleasure and again, he fails. "Dreamie, *please*.."

“You didn’t answer my question earlier, sweetheart.” Just to tease him, Dream delivers a lone languid stroke. “What else do you like being called?”

Mine, say you want to be called mine.

He doesn’t get a reply at first, only hiccuped whines and kisses on his neck that he guesses are meant to be persuasive. He’s not displeased, but he still refuses to give in, wanting to draw out more endearing reactions.

George yields, “Anything. Don’ care, please jus’.. h-help me.”

Dream scoffs at that, raising an eyebrow and angling his head so that George is forced to meet his condescending stare. “Look at you,” he whispers, showing some mercy by moving his fist leisurely. “So desperate to cum, you’re begging like a fucking *whore* .”

The reaction is instant. George moves a hand to claw at the one Dream has on his hip, managing to loosen its grip while the blonde is still caught off guard, and then thrusts up into the inviting warmth. Feeling generous, Dream allows him to do as he pleases and leans back, watching him begin to unravel.

“Dream, *Dream*, I’m g’na,” George cries with pleading eyes and Dream spares him a few fast-paced strokes. He’s nearly there, dangling dangerously close to the edge, and waiting for that last final push over.

“Ask,” Dream orders sharply, squeezing the base of George’s cock until the brunette jolts at the stinging pain.

It works like a charm. George’s nails dig into Dream’s shoulder again, sure to leave fresh crescents in their wake, and he manages a shattered, “Dream, *please!*”

Satisfied, Dream quickens the strokes he offers, mingling them with occasional pumps until George is shaking in his lap, dick spurting cum that stains both their chests as well as Dream’s hand. Dream milks him out carefully, teetering towards overstimulation, but George grabs onto Dream’s forearm with both hands before he can tease him too much.

George squirms when Dream's thumb brushes over his leaking tip and then he slumps forward, falling onto his unannounced caretaker. Dream welcomes him with soft kisses and sweet nothings, his clean hand sliding to George's back and rubbing gentle circles onto the sweaty skin.

"George, I have to get a towel," Dream laughs, nipping the lobe of the tired man's ear when he refuses to let up. "Don't be difficult."

He expects him to whine and lazily roll off to the side, but that doesn't happen.

Instead, George pushes himself back up to a sitting position and then slides himself down Dream's thighs, just enough to reveal the bulge straining against Dream's sweats. "W'na help," he exhales shyly. "Feel bad.."

"Aw, Georgie," Dream teases, "Don't feel b-*fuck!* "

His hips jerk upwards involuntarily when George gains the courage to cup his painful erection and *squeeze*. It's obvious that George hadn't known what kind of reaction he was going to get. Not only is he inexperienced (which is the whole *point*), but he also doesn't know the power he holds over Dream.

It's one thing to have someone's hand on his dick and it's another thing to have that hand be *George's*.

"Baby," Dream hisses and it's meant to be a warning, but when George leans over and mouths a wet kiss onto the start of his jawline, it turns into a plea. "At least let me clean you up first."

George pauses, contemplating the thought and then pulls back, scrunching his nose in defeat. "Fine," he concedes and crawls off of Dream's lap. There's a pout on his lips, but Dream's almost certain he doesn't realize and he grants himself leeway to snag a kiss for no reasons other than the fact that George is cute and Dream wants to.

Thankfully, there's a box of tissues on their desks from when George had caught the sniffles after being out in the rain for too long. Dream would also like to take this chance to reiterate that that wasn't his fault and was due to a faulty lapse of judgement from everybody else. Did they really think the man that has been living in the shadows for years was going to open the door for a stranger?

“Turn over for me,” Dream says while he wipes his hand clean. The used tissues get tossed into the waste bin and Dream does a small twirl of victory at his accurate aim. When he’s facing the bed again, George is waiting for him, legs spread and flaccid cock laying against his messy stomach. The blood rushes down Dream’s body so fast, he nearly tackles the brit then and there.

Plucking two more tissues out the box, he makes his way over to George and then motions for him to discard his clothes. “They’re dirty, I’ll get you a new set,” Dream elaborates when George gives him a hesitant glare. So, once the dirty briefs and sweats finally get kicked off, Dream makes quick work of cleaning the remnants off of George’s body, disposing the soiled tissues, and retrieving new clothes from George’s drawer.

“Thanks,” George mutters quietly as Dream helps him put on his new boxers and shorts. Dream responds with a warm smile, but George doesn’t face him and had Dream not seen the dark pink hue on his cheeks, he would’ve been hurt.

Once the waistband snaps into place, Dream leans back, unsure of where to go from here. His hands awkwardly rest on his lap and his fingers fiddle with one another, waiting for some sort of command. A few seconds of silence go by, neither of them having the confidence to do anything now that they’re no longer clouded by lust, until Dream decides to stand up and take care of his aching problem. He excuses himself and then aims to make a break for the door, but George’s slim fingers wind around his wrist before he can take any steps further.

“I still want to help,” George confesses, scooting over so that he’s sitting at the edge of the bed. He gives Dream a feeble tug and the younger man compliantly slides over to him. A second of confused tension passes and then George moves his hand down to tug the knot of Dream’s sweats. It comes undone (while the aforementioned strings of Dream’s heart tangle even more).

Dream is too busy caught up in his own thoughts, picturing the elation that’s about to come, that he doesn’t realize George has dipped his fingers past the waistband of Dream’s briefs until it’s being tugged down along with his gray sweats. They get bunched up around his knees and then are promptly forgotten in favor of his dick that throbs as it meets the cool air, finally spared of the burdensome restrictions.

George’s lips part in shock and Dream bites back a teasing remark lest he ruin the moment and lose his well-deserved prize. “You’re.. big,” the former observers, reaching out to wrap his fingers around the flushed dick that’s yearning to be touched. His fist can barely fit around half the size, a noticeable difference from earlier.

It really shouldn’t make Dream swell with pride, but it does. (It also really shouldn’t turn Dream on, but it does.)

With hesitance (and not reluctance, Dream notes), George begins to move his hand. At first they're slow strokes laced with uncertainty and shyness, but as Dream begins to grunt praises, George picks up the pace until they can hear the slick obscene sounds.

"Baby, you're so good to me," Dream pants and maybe he's used that pet name far too many times tonight for something that's supposed to be strictly a friends-with-benefit type of beat, but George doesn't seem to mind. In fact, the latter simply stares up at him in fascination, watching each twist Dream's face makes when he turns his hand a certain way.

His index finger dips into the slit and Dream expects him to lather it down the side, just like he had done, because he was here to teach him after all, but George is full of surprises. Dream should've definitely learned that by now.

"Dream," George says, stopping the movement of his hand abruptly and making Dream groan in dissatisfaction. "I wanna try something."

Dream tries to blink himself out of his lustful frustrations so that he can support George's endeavors, but matters only get worse when he meets George's eye and watches him place his dirty finger on his tongue. "Fuck," he says, running a hand through his hair and then he's being pushed back gently. He's three steps away from his initial spot when George slides off the edge of the bed and drops to his knees in front of him.

"George, what are you doing?" He asks, afraid that making speculations will only pummel him into disappointment.

And George, who's on his knees and has not one, but two fists pumping Dream's twitching cock gives him the most blank look he can manage. "What do you think I'm doing, idiot?"

Before Dream can think of a reply to match his attitude, George dips his head down, tongue flattening against the head and lapping away the salty mess. "Oh, fuck," Dream groans, head lolling forwards and hands flying to George's umber curls. "Shit, okay."

George has the audacity to sneer while the tip of his tongue is still tracing the veins on the side of Dream's dick and once he wraps his lips around the head, he makes sure Dream can feel the vibrations. It's meant to humiliate Dream, but Dream's arrogance is too high to come crashing down now. His fingers dig deeper into George's scalp before tightening around those smooth locks and he takes a breath, thrusting his hips an inch forward, just enough to stop George's fun, but not

enough for it to be uncomfortable.

“Don’t play with me, doll.”

George’s hands land on Dream’s thighs and he lets out a strangled noise of shock, but once he’s relaxed, he doesn’t make an effort to put a stop to Dream’s power trip. He stays put, only slightly tilting his head so that Dream can guide himself into his mouth with more ease, and then he flicks his gaze up.

The air in Dream’s lungs deplete at record speed and he’s instantly reminded of the events from days earlier when he’d been hunched over the toilet seat, his own fist tight around his cock while his mind stitched together this exact image for him.

But God was it even better in real life.

Dream delivers one shallow thrust, testing the waters, and when George makes no sign of discomfort, he cautiously begins to work towards a steady pace. “Tap me three times if you need to stop,” he whispers and George blinks twice, giving Dream’s thigh a gentle squeeze to coax him into continuing.

Beads of sweat trickle down the back of Dream’s neck and his lone strands of hair plaster themselves onto his forehead. The sun is no longer intruding in on their moment and the air conditioner is whirring in the background, but the room still burns. It’s hot, almost as hot as the mouth that engulfs the upper half of his pulsing erection. “You like this, don’t you?” His hands guide George’s head in time with the motions of his hips, each thrust reaching that much deeper down George’s throat. “Having your mouth full of cock.”

One particularly hard thrust causes George to splutter and Dream freezes, weakening his grip on George’s hair so that he can pull off if he needs to. George only takes a second to regain his composure and then he pushes Dream in deeper, hallowing his cheeks to show the taller man that he’s fine, that he can take it, that he’s—

“Such a fucking slut.”

Dream inhales sharply and then shoves George as far down his dick as he can go, holding him there for a few seconds until new streaks of tears appear on George’s face and his throat constricts around Dream, warning him about his gag reflex. With a shaky sigh, Dream yanks him off,

admiring the drool mixed with cum that smears over his lips and then dribbles down the edge of his mouth.

“Dream,” George whines and there’s a rasp to his voice that has Dream smirking. “Am I.. am I doing good?”

“Good?” Dream repeats, dropping one hand to caress George’s cheek and fighting off the urge to coo when George leans into his doting touch. “You’re perfect, baby. You’re taking me so well.”

George smiles to himself, still a bit disoriented, and willingly parts his lips when Dream squeezes the sides of his face together. He looks up, oblivious to what’s about to come, but when Dream bends over and spits into his mouth, he doesn’t seem the least bit phased and goes so far as to swallow it while maintaining eye contact.

Dream thinks he might faint.

“Open up, George,” and something about using his name while he’s tapping his dick against his friend’s lips makes everything feel so much more intimate, but it seems Dream is the only one thinking that way. George doesn’t find it strange, welcoming Dream’s hard shaft back into his mouth with little to no hesitation. Or if he does, he chooses not to comment.

Dream starts to grind his hips again, rolling them with enough strength to hit the back of George’s throat. The older man squeezes his eyes shut at the impact and claws at the back of Dream’s toned thighs, taking the rough treatment without resistance. A well known feeling begins to churn at the pit of Dream’s stomach, slowly accumulating enough weight to tip him over, and right as he’s dangling on the edge—

George pulls off.

It’s too cruel, but Dream knows George is only seeking quick vengeance for all the teasing Dream had done unto him earlier. He bites his lower lip and fights the temptation to simply manhandle George back on his cock, permitting him this one chance to have some actual fun.

George, himself, doesn’t seem to care about all of that though. “Dream,” he says. “Clay,” he repeats.

“Cum on my face.”

Dream is still a young man with hormones at the end of the day and when the person he’s been fantasizing about for weeks asks him to do something so vulgar, so crude, so *filthy*, how can he deny him? He forms a loose fist around his dick with one hand, the other pushing firmly on George’s head until it’s tipped back and he looks like a blank canvas longing for Dream to defile him. He pumps his dick a few more times and then tosses his own head back, groaning George’s name in between hushed curses, and paints him in streaks of his cum.

Just like that, George begins to descend, falling from grace and into the impurity and corruption that awaits him where Dream resides.

“Holy shit,” Dream sighs, finally taking a look at the man that remains all pliant on his knees for him. George is sitting there, white globs of Dream’s release clinging to his fringe and lashes. There’s also a splatter on the side of his face and white streaks covering his lips.

However, what catches Dream’s eye the most is the cum that George has caught on his tongue and it seems like George is waiting for him to notice because when Dream does, he makes a show of swallowing it. Dream has to internally battle his insane sex drive before he sports another boner.

He tugs off his grimy clothes and grabs a tissue, wiping off the residue from his hand and stomach, before sifting through his drawers for something new to wear. Once he’s donning a new pair of briefs and pants, he tosses his old clothes into the hamper and then turns to face George who is still very much in need of cleaning.

“Didn’t wanna do it yourself?” Dream teases, taking a few tissues out of the box and then carefully getting rid of the remains on George’s face. The mess stuck to his hair is a little harder to get off, but Dream takes his time and makes it work. “We still need to shower.”

“Later,” George mumbles, clearly too drowsy to care about his hygiene. Dream rolls his eyes, throwing away the dirtied napkins before grabbing a clean shirt to deal with the breeze that bites goosebumps onto his arms. Behind him, George complains again, “S’ cold, Dreamie.”

“Yeah?” he laughs, bunching up the shirt he has in his hand and tossing it to George who tugs it over his head without hesitation. It’s loose, exposing too much of George’s collarbones, and Dream is sure that when he’s not as tired as he is now, he’ll be hating his past self for putting his future self’s sanity at risk.

“Tired,” George announces and then Dream hears the pillows wheeze when George flops onto them.

He sticks his head through the hole of his new shirt, looking over at George and giving him an affectionate smile when he catches the brunette already staring at him. “Take a nap.”

George spreads his arms, already on the brink of sleep, “C’mere.”

Dream should say no. He should go to his own bed. He should be strict about the lines that they’ve drawn.

“Scoot over,” he mumbles, crawling into bed next to George and then wrapping his arms around the man’s lithe waist. He draws him in closer until he can tip his head down and leave a soft kiss on George’s crown. “I’ll wake you up for dinner.”

George hums and although it sounds noncommittal, Dream allows him to nod off in his arms. Meanwhile Dream, who was so ready to take a nap of his own, now feels wide awake. There are questions he needs answered, both by George and by himself, but he doesn’t know how to—he doesn’t even know where to begin.

It’s funny how Dream longs for freedom and yet he willingly keeps himself on these puppet strings that grow more and more restrictive day by day.

When George wakes up, Dream is no longer holding him. He’s by the door, waiting for George to get out of bed so that they can join the others for dinner. “About what happened,” George says as he fixes his shirt. It slides over his left shoulder again and Dream tries not to stare. “Listen—”

“It doesn’t have to mean anything,” is Dream’s practiced response. It’s the quote that George had said at the start of this whole shit show. “I’m just teaching you how to do things.”

He turns on his heels and makes his way to the kitchen. Too caught up in worrying over if he

sounded believably nonchalant or not, he doesn't realize that George is not following him.

And he doesn't catch the way George's face falls either.

Chapter End Notes

There was supposed to be so much more plot than porn in this chapter, but I don't know what happened. I'M SORRY!

I wrote so much and I checked the page count and the word count and realized that I... definitely needed to be split chapter 7 into 7 and 8 instead. That being said, I hope you guys aren't disappointed with me for this update. I promise the next one will be more plot heavy. (I'm also sorry for the slight cliff hanger.)

(I am extremely nervous to post this because I feel like this chapter is lacking considerably, but I hope you guys forgive me and stick around for the next chapter. Take care everyone!)

Here is my [twitter](#).

Waltz in Silence

Chapter Summary

Their relationship teeters like a seesaw. One day, Dream's thoughts are what weighs them down, and the other day, it's George's.

Chapter Notes

You guys know the drill. E for Explicit and—

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The rain patters against the window. Right now, it is gentle, but once the breeze blows over, it will roar with the need to be heard.

George watches as a lone droplet falls, sinking into the embrace of another, until their shared weight becomes too heavy and they fall, forgotten in the graveyard at the bottom of the panes. It's sad because it's an accurate portrayal of what has become of *them*. Now, you're probably wondering how and why George made the peculiar connection and the answer is simple.

He sees Dream in everything.

George lifts his gaze and traces the downfall of another sorrowful raindrop. This one wiggles astray and George's breath gets caught in his throat. It crawls and it turns and it avoids every other droplet in its path, narrowly dodging the last one before it hits the edge of the window.

God forbid.

It's nearly two in the morning and the house is dead silent. Why wouldn't it be? Everyone is asleep except for George. It's funny, considering how he's usually the one never awake, but lately, he's been finding it hard to sleep. He can't even blame it on jet lag because it's been weeks and it's not like he wasn't on the eastern standard time zone back in England anyway. His sleep schedule was still synced with Dream's.

Speaking of Dream, the man is knocked out on his own bed with his long limbs threatening to dangle off the edges. His face is relaxed, lips slightly parted and cheek squished against his pillow, and his soft breathing is much louder to George than the storm raging on outside.

When George realizes that he's standing idly beside Dream's bed, staring at his best friend while he sleeps, his first reaction is to slap his face with his palm. He doesn't expect the noise to resonate throughout the room, but it does, and for some reason Dream—who has slept through all the ruckus up until now—stirs awake. With squinted eyes, he stares at George and George definitely thinks that this is going to be the day he dies from embarrassment.

Without a word, Dream reaches out and curls his hand around George's wrist, tugging the smaller man with enough force to have him flying towards the bed. George lands with a small 'oof', maneuvering awkwardly so he can get a good look at Dream's face and ask him why the hell he just flung George over like a rag doll. Before he gets the chance to, Dream leans in and presses a gentle kiss onto his lips. Their breaths mingle, lips moving languidly, and George's eyes are still open when Dream pulls away. The blonde is out again within the next second.

This is the first time they've kissed in days.

It's not like George hadn't tried. He had done his best to fall back into their old routine of chaste pecks and occasional make out sessions, but everytime he leaned in, Dream would narrowly dodge him. Or if he offered to stay back and hang out with Dream, the younger man would insist he leave with the rest of the group, claiming that he was busy with work.

And that night goes unspoken of.

To be fair, George had a lot to say back then: a mouthful of questions and perhaps also unintentional confessions. However it was clear that there was a river between them with no bridge in sight. And if George had tried to swim across, he would probably get swept away by the currents and Dream—Dream wouldn't save him. Wouldn't even turn around and spare him a final glance.

George can't be mad at him though. He knew what he was essentially signing up for when he asked Dream for that first favor.

It's fleeting moments like this that has George questioning how good sanity is if he's surviving just fine without it. Here, lying in Dream's embrace, ensnared by a heavy arm that fits too snugly around his waist, George is more alive than he has been all week. Now a sane person would be

itching to leave, but George yearns to lean closer.

He's not sure when he falls asleep, but he's certain it's to the sound beating of Dream's heart.

It's a quarter to noon when George finally wakes up. He's definitely gotten up later than this, so it's not unusual that everybody else is already caught up in their daily shenanigans. They're courteous enough to go downstairs so that most of the noise doesn't reach George's ears (but even if it did, George would probably sleep through most of it).

Still, a part of him aches when he sees the dip in the bed next to him—a shallow reminder of who was lying there last night.

Unsurprisingly, Dream had backed out of doing the face reveal. Well, he did still have plans to do it before the end of their trip, but the date was up for debate. Although, knowing how impulsive the blonde could be, George wouldn't be surprised if he had gone and done it this morning. No, that didn't make sense either. He promised to do it with George.

And even if something shifted between them, there was no way Dream would go back on a promise.

With a heavy sigh, George pushes himself to sit upright, stretching out his arms before grimacing at the heat that engulfs him. It's a sharp contrast to the chilling temperatures of last night and suddenly the oversized hoodie hugging his frame is too much to bear. Naturally, he slides it off his frame and tosses it at the hamper, barely making it in. The first thing he notices then is that his t-shirt is stuck to his chest with sweat and so he tugs that off as well.

He's aiming for another ridiculous shot when the door swings open with no warning and suddenly he looks like a deer caught at headlights.

“Shit, sorry!” Dream curses, turning around at record speed. “I didn’t know you were changing, fuck, I thought you were still asleep. I was gonna wake you up for lunch.”

This is an odd change of events. Normally, George is the one that gets embarrassed easily, not Dream; if anything, the younger man basks in his overflowing confidence and glory. It’s even stranger given the fact that they’d seen each other shirtless on countless occasions.

George narrows his eyes, “What? It’s nothing you haven’t seen before.”

“George!” Dream whisper-shouts and the brunette watches as his shoulders move up and down with the sigh he lets out. “I- never mind. They’re waiting downstairs.”

And then he’s out and the door slams shut.

A frown creeps onto George’s face, followed shortly by a scowl. He slips out of Dream’s bed and then makes his way towards the dressers with lethargic steps. Dream’s dresser is much closer than his, so George invites himself to look through it. His hand grabs onto a random tee and swiftly tugs it over his head. While he struggles to put his arms into the sleeves, the door swings open again.

“Forgot my- what are you doing?”

George blinks at Dream, the shirt settling around the middle of George’s thighs and swaying as if it isn’t incriminating evidence. Dream glances down at where the shirt rests, up at George’s face, back down at his thighs, and then back up at his face—this time perplexed.

“Is that my shirt?”

George shrugs as a response to that question before firing one of his own, “You want it back?” He reaches down, fingers curling around the hem of the shirt.

It’s obvious that George is bluffing, but Dream falls for it anyway. “No! It’s fine,” the blonde says, frantically waving his hands. “You can, uh, you can keep it.”

That implies one of two things. Either Dream likes George wearing his shirt and wants to see him in

it again *or* he hates George wearing his shirt and he doesn't want it back now that George has touched it. Given how Dream has been acting lately, George really would bet a dime on the latter.

But Dream seems to read his mind and quietly clarifies, "It looks good on you."

Before George can reply, Dream is pushing past him, muttering something about his phone charger under his breath. Dream doesn't usually wear cologne, but there's a distinct smell that George can identify as him. It's pleasant and George only realizes he's chasing after its comfort when his knees wobble from the awkward angle.

Like right now.

Dream thrusts his arm out to catch George before he falls and George loathes it—loathes the way his reaction was almost instinctive, as if they've had lots of practice, as if Dream paid attention to the details, *his* details. Hope is much more vicious than disappointment. George would rather have Dream hate him than experience moments like this.

"Careful," Dream mumbles (like he cares) and then he's withdrawing his arm without a second glance.

George curls his hand around Dream's forearm before his last sane brain cell can discourage him and when he gets Dream's attention like intended, he doesn't know what to say. The two of them stare at one another, each trying to decipher the other wordlessly while masking their own thoughts and emotions.

Whatever, George thinks. He pushes himself onto his tiptoes and leans in to seek what can convey his feelings better than his words. This is the cowardly route out, but if this whole situation has taught George anything, it's that he fears losing Dream more than anything and it definitely feels like he's losing him now.

"Stop," Dream says, right before their lips meet.

George freezes, slowly pulling away and pursing his lips in dejection. He lets go of Dream's arm and moves to the side, allowing the taller man to pass through and retrieve his charger. His hand moves to tug up the side of the shirt that's fallen past his shoulder. Through his peripheral vision, he sees Dream run a hand through his golden curls.

“Sorry,” George whispers, not wanting Dream to think any less of him. He didn’t know what he was thinking—he *hadn’t* been thinking.

He hears Dream sigh and then feels fingers sift through his hair. When he looks up, fighting the urge to lean into the touch, Dream is smiling at him. (It brings George on the brink of tears and calms him down at the same time.) “Don’t be. It’s just that if we start now, we’re going to be even more late, idiot. Save it for later.”

“Still,” George presses on, casting his gaze on the rug beneath his feet. “I should’ve asked for permission.”

Two fingers tweak the tip of his nose and George jerks back with hands raised defensively over his face. He looks and feels scandalized, but Dream just laughs. “Stop apologizing. Whenever and wherever right?”

George merely stares at him, confused on why he’s acting so nonchalant when he had been anything but that for the last few days. Dream doesn’t notice his change in demeanor; or he does and chooses not to comment on it, but either way, George is left to answer his own questions.

While he’s caught up in his thoughts, Dream finally wiggles his phone charger out of the outlet that’s behind the bed frame and then makes a victorious noise. Once he’s done silently congratulating himself, he flashes George a boyish grin and extends a hand towards him. “Let’s go eat lunch, come on. They’re waiting.”

He looks like he’s come straight out of a dating simulator and if that doesn’t scream “danger: heartbreak” then George doesn’t know what does. Not that he indulges in those ridiculous games. Well, not more than once, but that was out of curiosity so it doesn’t count.

“Okay,” is what George settles for, slipping his hand into Dream’s and allowing the younger man to guide him. Danger has never felt so right and George wants to experience it just to *feel* something—and when Dream tugs him closer with a laugh, George feels *something* alright. He just can’t pinpoint what that something is because he’s never felt like this before. It’s so raw and it sheds him until he’s at his core, vulnerable in Dream’s eyes.

“Top of the mornin to ya!” Karl chirps playfully when the duo enter the kitchen. Alex and Sapnap are too heated in their game of 8ball to greet them, but George doesn’t really mind. He waits for Dream to let go of his hand because he doesn’t have the heart to do it first and when Dream does, he slides over to Karl. “Hey, George! Sleep well?”

George nods, hiding his mouth behind his fist when he yawns, “Like a log.”

“I’m pretty sure the phrase is ‘like a baby,’” Alex offers and George is met with a snarky grin when he turns to flip the younger man off. “Love you too, Georgie.”

Sapnap, who’s looking very much defeated, pockets his phone and walks over to George, slinging his arm around his shoulder and pulling him in close. “Morning, sleeping beauty,” he sneers, pinching George’s cheek with his free hand. George pretends to bite at it and Sapnap makes a face of disgust. “Ew,” he says. “Dream, put it on a leash.”

“*What?*” Dream asks, almost dying from the fit of laughter that it sends him in. George’s left eye twitches because what on Earth is so funny? “Oh, you’re such an idiot.”

Sapnap leaves George’s side to return to his seat and Dream sits down next to him, aiming a punch at his shoulder as they discuss something under their breaths. Maybe it’s because George is drilling holes into the back of their heads, but Sapnap meets his gaze briefly, lifting an eyebrow when he does, and then George feels shame crawl down his back so he looks away.

“So,” he breathes out, “Lunch?”

Karl gives him a look and then nods his head over to the stack of bags they have sitting at the center of the kitchen island. “MrBeast burgers,” he offers when George has bewilderment written all over his countenance. That bewilderment then turns into skepticism and it’s not like George is a picky eater, but *man* was American fast food packed with sodium. “It’s good, trust me. Worth the extra calories.”

“You’ll burn it off anyway,” Alex says, patting the free seat next to him which George takes. “We’re going to an amusement park afterwards. Lots of walking and no food because the food there is way too overpriced.”

“You’re practically a millionaire,” George replies with a snort, reaching over at the pile to grab one of the bags. He peeks inside and inspects the burger at an arm’s length as if it were an extraterrestrial specimen. Once he deems that it’s safe and ready for consumption he turns his head to face Karl, who’s loitering by the cabinets. “Can I get a plate?”

The way Karl’s lips part in shock makes George instantly regret his choice of words, but it’s too

late to do anything now. “A plate? What? You eat burgers on a plate?” Despite the bullying, he reaches behind him and fetches a plate. “Mans said ‘*Can I get a plate?*’ What a weirdo.” The british accent is very, very off, but if George corrects him, he’ll have to hear an endless spiel in his defense by everyone else. It’s always “make fun of the British guy” day around here.

“Anyway,” George rolls his eyes and places his attention back on Alex who is waiting eagerly for him to take his first bite. “An amusement park you said?”

He hasn’t been to one in a while. In fact, the last time he went to one was probably when he went to Winter Wonderland with Ponk, if that even counts, and before that.. he really can’t remember. It’s not because he’s one of those adults who believe they “grow out” of doing something they liked as kids—I mean, honestly, he plays minecraft for a living—it’s just that he’s never had the time to or had friends who’ve wanted to go. Well, he also rarely leaves his house and he hasn’t reached out to anybody to plan anything either. He’s sure Ponk would be more than happy to accompany him somewhere again, but George is labeled a homebody for a reason.

“Yeah, it was Sapnap’s suggestion,” Alex shrugs, sliding over a few packets of ketchup when George wiggles the burger out of the bag until it falls onto his plate. It’s a bit soggy, probably from having been compressed in a bag for so long, but George has definitely eaten things that looked less appetizing before and been pleasantly surprised.

“What was my suggestion?” Sapnap asks, raising his hands to catch the bag that Karl tosses to him. Dream mimics his actions and the two of them bump shoulders at their success.

“The amusement park,” Dream repeats and then wastes no extra second, biting into the burger as if he hasn’t eaten in days. Sapnap gives him a look of disgust and then proceeds to devour his burger the same exact way. Sometimes, George isn’t sure if being their best friend is a flex or an embarrassment.

Either way, he’s more interested in the discussion at hand than the who-can-eat-faster championships finale. He nudges Alex in the arm with his elbow, gesturing for him to continue, and he does. “It’s really nice out today and we didn’t know what to do, so it was kind of an impromptu decision. Karl says the place is fun and vlog worthy though.”

George’s eyes drift towards Dream, but Dream is already staring at him, knowing the concern that’s hanging off the tip of his tongue. “It’s fine, George,” Dream waves dismissively and then takes a big sip of his water. He lifts a finger, telling George to wait, and then regains his composure from the gulp that nearly killed him judging by the coughing fit he goes into. “I’m planning to meet with MrBeast today anyway.”

“You’re what?”

“Yeah, he called and said he wanted to do a video,” Dream says as if it’s the most obvious thing in the world. “I don’t have to show my face or anything. It’ll be fine.” George is still unconvinced that this is a good idea and it clearly shows because Dream speaks up again. “Oh, come on. I’ll be okay! Plus, he’s doing like a \$150,000 game of monopoly. You *know* I’m like—a God at that game. Capitalism is my middle name. It’d be stupid of me not to go.”

“He’s not lying,” Sapnap chips in and Karl hums enthusiastically in agreement. This doesn’t subdue the worry that grows inside of George, but it’s not like he can tell Dream *not* to go. Dream is his own person and if he wants to go (and jeopardize his privacy) then by all means, he can go.

“I’ll go with you,” George says quietly, putting his burger down in some weird display of authority. “So that you’re not alone.”

Alex makes an offended noise at that and George turns his head to face him inquisitively, wondering why on earth he was acting up. “You’re gonna leave me alone with them?” He asks in a high-pitched voice, using over exaggerated puppy eyes that never work on George and only serve to ‘disgust’ him.

“Whoa,” Karl points an accusatory finger at Alex with narrowed eyes. “We’re your *fiances*, what the honk?”

It’s clear that he’s joking, sometimes bits from streams make it into their offline conversations, but George doesn’t miss the way Sapnap places a hand on the small of Karl’s back. They’ll talk about that later, when Sapnap talks George’s ear off about it like usual. Alex, on the other hand, plays along with Karl’s mischief, “Slash p.”

“Anyway,” Dream cuts in abruptly with a snort, leaving Alex and Karl to bicker amongst themselves. “I’ll be fine, Georgie.” He’s done eating and is already dabbing the corners of his mouth with his napkin, meanwhile George hasn’t even touched his burger yet. “Sweet of you to worry about me though,” Dream coos and then he ruffles George’s hair, causing the brunette to turn ice cold in his seat. He tries his hardest not to think about Dream leaning over, brushing his lips over the tip of his ear to whisper only loud enough for the two of them to hear. “Meet me upstairs in fifteen?”

A breeze blows past George, filling in the space that Dream had left. Once the words have fully sunk in, George finds that the burger looks extremely appetizing, and begins eating. Fast. He has to take breaks every now and then so that he doesn’t choke on hiccups, but he definitely finishes way

quicker than usual. From the corner of his eye, he can see that Karl has stopped teasing Alex in favor of talking to Sapnap about what George assumes are the group's plans for the day. Alex is busy eating his burger and checking something out on his phone. Nobody will notice if he leaves.

Of course the ideal scenario never happens and as soon as George tosses out the bag of his burger, Sapnap speaks up. "Not too loud, please."

If there was anything in George's vicinity that he could throw at Sapnap without the risk of it breaking, he would, but there's nothing in sight so he flips the man off instead. Sapnap responds with a wink and flying kisses, causing George to roll his eyes and beeline out of the kitchen without looking back. As he makes his way upstairs, he notices that the door to his shared room with Dream is slightly ajar. His stomach churns with anticipation, but right as he's standing on the imaginary welcome mat, he realizes one crucial thing.

He hasn't brushed his teeth yet.

Oh *god*. He had tried to kiss Dream earlier with morning breath.

On the bright side, that could be why Dream had swerved him and maybe George really *had* been overthinking everything. On the bad side, his breath must've smelled terrible and there was no way he was going to ever recover from this.

He pushes the door open and rushes towards the bag on top of his dresser. Once he's retrieved the toothbrush, he turns around to head to the bathroom, but is met with the sight of Dream's chest.

"Why are you so red? We haven't even done anything," Dream teases, taking a step back so that he can lean down to George's eye level without knocking their heads together. "What were you thinking about, Georgie?" Sometimes, George considers buying an earlier return ticket to England.

"Dream, *move*," George huffs, refusing to meet the blonde's gaze because the humiliation from his horrific realization has yet to subside. The man does anything but that and even takes a step closer, just to tease George. There's no way he doesn't know why George is so eager to leave, especially given the fact that the brit has his toothbrush clutched tightly in one hand.

"Give me a kiss first." Dream puckers his lips obnoxiously and George recoils with a grimace. This is not what he was asking for when he wished that Dream would 'just kiss him already'.

“I have to brush my teeth, nimrod,” George grumbles, trying to step around Dream, but getting blocked with ease. The playing grounds are uneven: one, Dream is way bigger than him; two, Dream used to play flag football (whatever that is); and three, Dream is *way* bigger than him (and him liking that difference does not diminish this argument what-so-ever).

That also makes him wonder if he never kissed his past girlfriends because they were all smaller than him. Something definitely hadn’t felt right, but he’d never really dugged into that before because he didn’t find it necessary. Not until he met Dream, at least.

He can't believe he's having these thoughts *now*.

George takes a second to think of a tactical maneuver. His best odds are if he ducks under Dream’s arm and then lunges for the door, but of course when he tries to do that, Dream spins around and catches him with one arm. The movement is swift, almost effortless, and George both loves and loathes how Dream always makes a display of his strength. He’s not that strong—as strong as a gamer who occasionally hits the gym can be—but he’s stronger than George and that’s all that matters in a scuffle. Not that George can’t hold his own weight, of course. He’s very independent and if needed, he can land a good sucker punch, but he’s not gonna give Dream a blackeye for playing around with him. Dream is the human equivalent of a golden retriever—George wouldn’t hit a golden retriever. Who would?

So, while George is no “damsel in distress”, Dream is definitely flinging him around like a *ragdoll* in distress.

“Wait like two minutes Dream!”

It really is like talking to a dog. Dream lets go and gives him the saddest eyes he can muster, along with a sickening pout. His expression is much like Alex’s from earlier, but this time, it unfortunately *works*. George pinches the bridge of his nose, the fist holding his toothbrush now on his hip, and he feels like a guilty owner that’s just told off his dog for bothering him while he’s busy. He does make the mistake of taking his eyes off of Dream though and the next second, Dream is *pouncing* onto him.

They land on the ground with a loud thud, but Dream makes sure to cushion George’s fall by cradling the back of his head with one hand. There’s a faint, “I said not too loud!” from downstairs and George wants to verbally curse Sapnap off, but Dream’s lips are suddenly on his.

The kiss doesn’t last for long. It’s too short to even be called a proper kiss and therefore, by the unofficial definition he’s made up, it doesn’t count as a lesson; therefore, Dream still owes him one

after George is done brushing his teeth. Nonetheless, it's the ones like this—the ones with no clear purpose and hidden smiles—that linger on George's mind for days.

Don't get him wrong, he enjoys all of the kisses he and Dream share (as much as he can without it being considered weird), but he doesn't understand why Dream kisses him like *this*.

"That's disgusting," he says, once Dream stands up and offers a hand out for George to take. When George is back on his two feet, he gives Dream one last half-hearted glare before speed walking out the room and down the hallway.

He slams the door shut when he gets to the bathroom, not out of anger, but pure agony. As soon as the door is locked he places his hands on the edge of the sink and hunches over, staring up at his reflection in the mirror with distaste. His hair is a mess, courtesy of Dream tackling him onto the ground like a professional quarterback, and his cheeks are red enough to appear as sunburns. With a sigh, he turns the faucet on and then cups his hands to collect enough water to splash his face. It feels refreshing. George tips his head back and runs his hands through his hair. Wet curls fall over his forehead and George tilts his head to the side while staring at his mirror image. He doesn't understand what's attractive about messy hair—or *wet* messy hair for that matter—but he trusts Dream and if Dream says it looks good, then it must, right?

He snags the tube of toothpaste off the counter and then squeezes out a nurdle to brush his teeth with. Brushing his teeth always takes over a minute because he makes sure to get all the corners and diligently goes over his tongue as well. So, by the time he's done, Alex is banging on the door with an urgent need to pee. Sharing one bathroom amongst four boys is definitely not ideal and George prays that when (if) he ever moves in with Dream and Sapnap, the house comes with at least two bathrooms.

And yes, four boys because Karl has his own bathroom in his bedroom, but the rest of them usually don't use that one. It feels intrusive. Which is weird considering they practically know all about each other and are constantly in each other's face.

The door is sealed shut when George reaches his shared guest room, a clear sign that he should knock before entering, but because he's too distracted by his thoughts, he blows past the warning and walks right in. Dream is in the middle of changing. Thankfully, he's fully dressed, save for the black button up shirt that's hanging undone. His first reaction should be to turn around and give him some privacy, but he's seen Dream countless several times before and the more *important* matter at hand is—

"Why are you so dressed up?"

Dream turns his head, raising his eyebrow at George as he finishes fixing his belt. Unbelievable, George thinks as he snaps the cover onto his toothbrush and then shoves it back into his bag. Dream rarely dresses up and when he does, it's for something important, not something like a gathering for a youtube video. Why did he pack such nice clothes anyway? Was this planned beforehand?

He can't help the frown that's on his face, but he doesn't shy away from the problem and only faces it head on. "I asked you a question, idiot," he mumbles under his breath as he walks towards the lanky man. His hands reach out, grabbing onto each side of the unbuttoned shirt, and he tries not to stare at the v-line that disappears underneath the waistband of Dream's black jeans, but that task—it's a grueling one.

"Just thought I'd be fashionable," Dream replies, letting George button his shirt up for him. "Lots of people are gonna be there. I don't wanna look lame."

George clicks his tongue against the roof of his mouth, "Be yourself." After finishing the last button, he fixes the collar of the shirt before smoothing his hands down Dream's torso.

"Aw, baby," Dream laughs and tickles George's chin with his fingers. "You think I'm cool?"

George scowls and swats at the mischievous hand, earning him a peck on the forehead. "Shut up," he pushes the taller man away with his hands and makes a face of disgust (which is hardly genuine).

"Well, I mean, I am," Dream leans back, observing himself in the mirror with a cocky smirk on his lips. He runs a hand through his hair, making it an even bigger mess, but looking ridiculously attractive at the same time. "Besides, don't you think I look good? Hot, even?"

George scoffs, stepping back so that Dream can back in his momentary hour of glory—spotlight and all. "You are literally so annoying. If you search up the word 'annoying' in a dictionary, your name would be right next to it." His words hold no bite and his answer to Dream's questions are quite obvious, given that he's ogling at him right now. "Are you sure you don't want me to go with you?"

Dream turns to face him again, his smirk turning into a grin, and he makes an 'OK' sign with his fingers while winking. "I'm all good, mom, don't worry about me."

“Yeah, well if I’m a mom, that makes you a milf hunter.”

“George!”

Amusement parks are amazing. They’re great. They’re fun to be at and a good distraction from the bullshit that bugs George 24/7.

However, today, they’re definitely not hitting the same.

“You know,” the cashier at the ice cream station says, twirling a finger around a stray lock of hair. She’s been eyeing George since he’s been in the line and George would have to be blind not to notice. Now that she’s finally gotten the chance to take his order, she’s doing her best to strike up a conversation. “I get off in thirty minutes if you need someone to spend the day with.”

George kind of wishes the ground would eat him up alive.

“No thanks, he’s spending it with me,” Alex butts in. He has his cup of chocolate chip ice cream in one hand and George’s free hand in the other. George doesn’t even know when he had gotten the chance to hold it and normally, he’d tell him off, but right now, he’s thankful.

The girl looks embarrassed and she immediately apologizes, to which Alex laughs and reassures her before tugging George away from the nightmare that had unfolded before him.

“Thanks,” George sighs, pulling his hand out of Alex’s grasp so that he can begin to eat his ice cream. He sees Alex shrug, mouth full of his savory treat, and George takes that as a silent ‘no problem’. “Are Sapnap and Karl still on that haunted mansion ride?” Alex nods this time and George smiles. “I bet Sapnap’s screaming like a little girl.”

If he's going to be honest, he would probably fare just as awfully in there as Sapnap. He hates jump scares and loud noises and haunted houses have a surplus of both. No thank you. Also, seeing how things have gone today, his seatmate would have been Alex and Alex would have definitely tried to scare George every chance he got. Not going was his only real option.

The ice cream is sweet and helps subdue the growing headache George has. A sigh leaves him as he hangs the spoon in his mouth, letting the dessert melt onto his tongue. Mist from the fan clings to his arms, mixing with sweat as they both work to cool him down from the harsh rays of the sun.

"Has Dream texted you yet?" Alex asks, tilting his head to the side. George doesn't recall seeing him toss out his trash, but maybe he had been too occupied with his thoughts to realize.

He shakes his head, reaching in his pocket to pull his phone out. Nothing. "I told him we'd be coming back soon, but he hasn't said anything." A message pops up as soon as he finishes talking, but it's from Karl. They're done with the ride and they're heading over to the ferris wheel now. "Let's go," he mumbles, tossing his empty cup into the trash can before waiting for Alex to follow.

When they get to the line, Karl is hopping near the front, beckoning them over, while Sapnap is next to him looking as pale as a ghost. "Dude," Alex laughs, bumping his shoulder against Sapnap's. "You alright, man?"

"I might," Sapnap pauses to grimace, "vomit." Immediately, the other three backup and Sapnap rolls his eyes, clutching his stomach tightly. "Lots of twists and turns," he elaborates and then pushes past George slowly. "I think I'm gonna sit this one out, guys. Let me know when you're done."

George watches him wobble towards a secluded corner, adjusting his mask quickly to allow a slither of fresh air to sneak in. "You guys can ride together. I'll go by myself," he says once he turns back to Karl and Alex. The two of them share a look and then nod, stepping further up the line.

It's not that he doesn't *want* to ride with them; rather, he needed some time to himself and this was the perfect opportunity. Unfortunately, the universe always refuses to listen to him in his time of need and when he finally gets in a cart, the worker shoves another single rider in with him.

"Hey," the stranger says, very awkwardly. It's an effort though and George would feel bad ignoring him because he seems like a nice person who would much rather be in his own cart instead of intruding George's.

“Hello,” George replies softly, nodding his head once at the guy to be polite. “I’m George.” The introduction is short, but he smiles to keep it sweet. Obviously, that’s hard to see behind his mask, but he’s been told his eyes give him away and judging by how the stranger visibly relaxes, George would say the statement rings true.

“Max,” the man replies, scratching the nape of his neck awkwardly. “You’re not from here, huh?” The ride begins moving and Max grips onto the handle bar nervously. George realizes then that the conversation probably serves as a distraction for him, so he decides to entertain him. He’s not all too entirely sure why someone who’s afraid of the ride would go on it alone, but he’s supposes the guy has his reasons.

“England,” George responds, chuckling at the end of his sentence and turning his attention to the horizon that slowly inches into view. “I came to visit my friends. They’re above us right now.”

Max moves forward just a bit, inspecting the cart above them. They can only see Karl and Alex’s shoes, but that’s enough for him to acknowledge their presence. “I see,” Max says, leaning back in his seat. “Well, are you having fun?” Their chair squeaks as the ride comes to a halt and Max looks around curiously, but sees George shrug his shoulders to answer his question. “Something bothering you?”

George knows that Max is only asking to be considerate, not because he actually wants to hear what George has to say, but even then—he rants.

“Actually, yeah,” George says, turning in his seat to face Max as the ride moves again. “I have this friend—let’s call him Cat—who’s worried about his other friend, Dog. So, for context Cat and Dog are best friends,” George pauses at the title. “Right—and so, Cat asks Dog for help on learning something and Dog does.”

“Something?”

“Not important,” George says quickly. “Anyway, Dog keeps helping Cat, but one day, Dog suddenly stops helping Cat—and Cat starts feeling weird that Dog isn’t helping Cat.” He frowns, clearly frustrated, and Max simply smiles encouragingly. “But that’s how things were before and Cat doesn’t know why he feels so upset when it *should* be normal and fine. Not to mention Dog doesn’t care either! And now Dog is out with other.. animals.. instead of Cat, dressing up in fancy clothes which he never does and taking weird risks which he *also* never does—and when Cat offered to go with him, he said *no*. He also outright ignores Cat, but then acts like everything is okay when they’re alone.”

George is a panting mess at the end of his rant and Max waits for George to signal that he's done before speaking up. "Well, first," Max says. "I reckon the 'something' *is* important if it's got Cat all worked up. Crucial to the story, you know?"

"Kissing," George sighs, burying his face in his hands out of embarrassment. "He was helping me learn how to kiss."

"Oh, so we're no longer talking about Cat and Dog?" Max teases, trying to lighten the mood, and George appreciates it. "Well then, George, I say you should talk to him about it. It sounds like there's a lot of kissing and not enough talking, so misunderstandings happen. Did you guys talk about boundaries and feelings and all that?"

"Everything was consensual," George says, staring at the dazzling silhouette of the city as the ferris wheel comes to another stop while their cart is perched at the top. "As for feelings, we're just friends." His fingers wiggle around in his pocket, but he decides against taking a picture at the last second, afraid he'll drop his phone.

"Well, yeah, obviously you two are just friends. You two haven't spoken about it, so how could you be anything more?"

The wheel starts moving again and George tries to memorize as much of the scenery as he can before it fades. "What do you mean?" He asks Max, not even trying to hide his confusion, and that earns him a laugh.

"George," Max begins as the ride slowly comes to an end. The bar lifts up, freeing them from its grasp and Max hops out first before extending a hand. George doesn't need it, but he finds himself taking it anyway, and he hops off the seat as well. "I've just met you and I don't know your friend at all, but I'm gonna take a wild guess that's actually not so wild and tell you that he likes you too."

"Huh?" First of all, *why* would Dream like him; second of all, they're best friends; and third of all, *too*?

"Based on what I'm hearing, it's giving me the friends-with-benefits cliché type of beat." George watches as Max pulls a napkin and a pen out of his pocket. "I suggest you talk to him," Max continues as he scribbles something messily and then hands the napkin to a bewildered George. "But if things don't work out, I'd love to take you out for some coffee some time."

When he leaves, George notices that Karl, Sapnap, and Alex are waiting for him a couple feet in front of them. He sees Max and Alex exchange a few words before the former disappears into the crowd. Karl beckons him over and when George gets there he asks if he's ready to go and George nods slowly, still in the middle of processing everything that had just happened. Sapnap snatches the napkin out of his hand in the meantime.

"A number?" Sapnap asks with a surprised laugh and then he slings his arm around George's shoulders. "That's my baby! Was he nice? Are you gonna call him?"

"He was nice, but no, now give that back, Sap," George replies with a groan, trying to snag back the piece of paper, but failing to do so because the younger man hands it off to Karl who holds it high above their heads. George can't be bothered to embarrass himself in public over a phone number.

"Bummer," Alex says and George turns to face the man who has a sour pout on his lips. "He was a fan of mine and he seemed chill. Now Dream's gonna kill the poor thing."

George tosses his hands in the air at that comment, earning everyone's attention. "Me and Dream aren't a thing! Why does everyone think—" he cuts himself off with a loud sigh and pinches the bridge of his nose. Sapnap tugs him away from the people that pass by behind him and although George is thankful for the gesture, he can't help the pointed look he gives his best friend.

"Dude," Karl chuckles in disbelief. "I know you weren't about to ask us why everyone thought you and Dream were dating." The walk back to their car isn't a long one, but it feels that way due to the humidity that suffocates them with each and every step. The occasional whisper of a breeze makes them all shudder with yearning.

"You tell me, George, you tell me."

Instead of answering, George silently makes up his mind to confront Dream when they get home.

Coincidentally, Dream pulls his car into the driveway at the same time Karl does and the group reunite in the parking lot. Covid warrior Dream still has his mask tightly secured on his face when he steps out of the car and it's only once they're all safely inside that he tugs it off. They all take turns washing their hands before filing into the living room and sprawling out on the seats to discuss their days. George decides to save his questions for later, when him and Dream are alone and in the comfort of their own beds.

It's silent for only a second before Alex whistles, "Dream! You got something you wanna tell us?" Like a brainless horde of zombies, they all turn their heads lazily to face Dream who looks equally as confused until Alex makes a gesture with his right hand.

"Oh," Dream says, slapping a hand over his neck. "Long story short, I felt too uncomfortable to take my mask off and I wanted to leave when they started drinking, but I was unable to. You guys weren't back yet and Jimmy insisted everyone tested negative." George doesn't like where this story is going and he doesn't know why Dream hasn't moved his hand away from that spot on his neck either. "Anyway, this girl gets drunk and like *body slams* into me. I'm trying to peel her away, but she's clinging on for dear life and.." he pulls the hand away and the group erupts in obnoxious 'oo's and loud clapping.

George stays silent and idle in his seat.

There's a hickey blooming at the nape of Dream's neck.

"Was she cute?" Sapnap asks, clearly intrigued in Dream's risque adventure. Dream grins—of course he grins—and when he nods, all the boys (except for George) start giggling with excitement.

"She was cute," Dream reaffirms and George doesn't like the way he seeks everyone's eager reaction except for his. He hasn't spared George a single glance since they've entered the room. "She gave me her number when we were playing monopoly. I won by the way." There's another round of excited murmurs. "But yeah, I left after all of that because I wasn't gonna risk getting sick and besides, she was drunk, she couldn't give consent."

"And he's a real one, your honor," Karl says into the imaginary mic before leaving the room to fetch them drinks.

“Dang, both of my best friends are getting some, when is it *my* turn?” Sapnap sighs dramatically. Karl shouts from the kitchen to playfully tell Sapnap he heard that and Sapnap apologizes with a cheeky grin.

Dream finally turns his head to give George his attention, “Both?” The question is for Sapnap, but it’s clear that Dream wants George to elaborate. However, before he gets the chance to, Alex jumps in.

“Some guy rode the ferris wheel with George and gave him his number.” If stares could kill, Alex would be dead and George would be the culprit. “He seemed chill and he was a fan of mine, so please. If you’re gonna murder him, can you please make it painless?”

Karl returns into the room just as Alex finishes his request and tosses around the cans of soda before sitting down next to Dream, who stares at Alex in confusion. “Why would I murder him? George is free to date anyone he wants.” George inhales sharply and he doesn’t know why. Max’s words are ringing in his head, urging him to cut in and ask Dream if they can continue this discussion in private, but a stronger part of him just wants to listen and hear what Dream has to say. “We’re just friends.”

That decides it.

“Yeah,” George interrupts quickly. “He asked to take me out for some coffee, so I’ll probably go later this week when we don’t have plans.”

“What?” Dream asks and George has to count to five before meeting the blonde’s narrowed gaze. “You’ve spoken to him once for like five minutes and you’re thinking of meeting up with him already? That’s dangerous.”

“You just said I could date anyone I want,” George replies. He tries to play off the bitter taste on his tongue as a joke by adding on, “You jealous?” Sapnap snorts at that and both Karl and Alex take a sip of their soda to build on the comedic display.

“Worried is more like it,” Dream retaliates while popping the tab of his soda open with one hand. “At least let me go with you.”

It’s a moment of déjà vu and George has to bite his tongue not to point out how the tables have turned. He ends up nodding his head in Alex’s direction, tossing his own soda can back and forth in

his hands as he speaks. "Alex can keep an eye on me. You're busy, aren't you? You've been telling me you have work to do all week." Maybe he's doing this out of spite, but the statement is valid. Dream has claimed to have a packed schedule each time George has tried to hang out with him this week. Even just to talk, kissing lessons and all sexual endeavors aside.

"I can make time," Dream argues, even after Alex tries to reassure him that he'll keep a good eye on George.

"Interesting. After ignoring me all week, you're suddenly free?" George raises an eyebrow before standing up. "Well, no thank you. I'll be fine, Dreamie. Sweet of you to worry though." Firing Dream's own words from earlier back at him definitely is a dead give away to the anger and frustration he's feeling, but he can't be bothered to mask it.

"I have a stream to prepare for," George announces, sarcastically bowing and then excusing himself. It's over an hour later, but he needs to get out of the living room *now*. There are quiet goodbye's and promises to join before the stream officially starts, but George barely hears any of it. He *does*, however, hear the footsteps that hurry behind him.

And he feels the hands that push him into his room and the pin him against the door.

With his chest pressed against the wooden surface, there isn't much for him to do other than to stand there and wait to be released. Yet he doubts that's gonna be anytime soon, knowing Dream and his insistent urge to demonstrate his superiority in terms of strength. His palms flatten against the door and he tries to push himself away from it, but Dream only presses in harder, his own hands on either side of George's head.

"What do you want?" George finally asks, giving up struggling rather easily. He doesn't have the time or energy to deal with this. A shiver runs down his spine when he feels Dream speak. Feels, not just hears, because Dream has latched his lips onto the nape of his neck.

"You."

Dream's teeth dig down harshly onto the soft patch of skin right above George's collarbone and the brunette feels his knees give in, causing him to lean against the door for support. Large hands slide down and rest on George's hip, anchoring him to make sure he doesn't fall. Despite the extra precautions, George still feels like he's dangerously teetering between floating and crashing.

“Dre- *Clay*. What are you doing?” He hisses as Dream slots a knee between his legs, pulling him back up against the taller man’s chest. Any other questions and ‘complaints’ get knocked out of him and replaced with a whine when one of Dream’s hands ventures upwards from George’s hip, sliding underneath the hem of his shirt and brushing over the warm skin.

Dream finally pulls away from the crook of his neck, licking a stripe up the side before tugging at the lobe of George’s ear with his teeth and then nibbling at the helix. His left hand, which is now stationed over George’s chest, grows playful and two fingers single out to roll one of George’s sensitive nubs between them. The cold touch causes George to jolt at first, but then the pleasure bites away the discomfort and George knocks his forehead against the door. With small shudders running down his body, he surrenders to Dream’s touch and Dream takes this as a green light for him to move his other hand past the waistband of George’s tight jeans.

“Reminding you what you’ll be missing out on if you go on that date.”

If George was already lost in bliss from Dream meticulously teasing his sensitive nipples, then he completely disappears in a maze of ecstasy when Dream cups his crotch and pushes his hips against George’s backside to have him roll into the sinful touch of his hand. The dying flame inside of George burns to life again, threatening to melt his walls from the inside out until he’s left bare in Dream’s arms. George mindlessly bucks into the teasing touch, seeking for some relief from the heat that slowly engulfs him, and rhythmically grinds himself against Dream’s hardening crotch as well.

There’s no way Dream isn’t burning with him.

His lips are parted and slick with spit, probably bitten to a demanding shade of cherry, and his eyes are half-lidded, barely being able to make out the hands that disappear underneath his clothing. His fingers have begun clawing at the door and although the polish makes it hard to dent, George is sure he’s left some marks on the white paint. The same way Dream has left bruises on his body that he’ll never be able to forget, even when they wash away with time.

“I thought,” George gasps, keening as Dream moves his attention from one nipple to the other and begins leaving wet, open-mouthed kisses down the pale expanse of George’s neck. “I thought you didn’t care.”

He feels Dream scoff against his skin and the sensation of the man’s tongue lapping into the marks his sharp teeth have left makes George buckle. It feels vulgar. It *is* vulgar. Dream’s tongue is skilled and Dream has no intentions of hiding that. Meanwhile, the hand he has in George’s pants delve into the brit’s boxers, curling around the base of his weeping cock. Dream remains silent, working both his hands to make sure George is trembling with pleasure and releasing the most wanton moans that can definitely be heard through the thin walls.

A cry of Dream's name falls from George's lip when the taller man begins to work his fist up and down George's dick at a merciless pace, twisting and turning so that George can feel all different kinds of stimulation. When Dream pinches George's nipple and simultaneously tightens his grip on George's cock, the smaller man nearly cums. It's embarrassingly fast, but Dream knows all his buttons in such a small amount of time and he's definitely had practice before, while George has only known his right hand.

"What do good boys do when they want to cum?" Dream mumbles next to George's ear, now shamelessly pressing his hips against George's backside with shallow thrusts. The layers of clothing between them only adds to the build up of frustration, but even then, the outline of Dream's cock dragging along the curve of George's ass makes the latter male quiver with cloudy desire.

"Please," George whines and he feels Dream's hand leave his shirt. Fingers dance up his chest, his neck, his jaw, until two of them push past George's bruised lips and George welcomes them hungrily. He moves his tongue swiftly over and under them and savors the salty taste.

Dream's fingers press down, forcing George's mouth to fall more open, and the strain on George's jaw begins to sting, but George honestly couldn't care less. Not when all he can think about is dancing his tongue around those invasive fingers, covering them in spit for whatever reason. Drool drips from the corners of George's mouth, dampening little spots on his shirt and his pants, but George doesn't recoil in disgust like he normally would. Filthy as it is, George enjoys it, so when Dream hums in satisfaction and pulls his fingers out of George's mouth, the brunet mewls in opposition.

"I wanna try something new. Let me know if you need to stop, alright?" Dream whispers into George's hair. Dazed and wanting nothing more than the return of Dream's fingers, the shorter man barely manages a desperate whimper in response.

At some point between George wiggling his hips to seek out friction and giving up when he can't find any, Dream has managed to yank his jeans and briefs down to the middle of his thighs. The uncomfortable pooling of clothes makes it impossible for George to squeeze his legs shut and that only serves to please Dream more. George flinches when he feels Dream spread his cheeks, wet fingers exploring the valley in between and then stroking the rim of his pretty pink hole. His first reaction is that although it's foreign, it's not unpleasant. It's not unwelcome.

So, he stays still and allows Dream to continue whatever it is that he's doing.

Pliant, Dream calls him, and George can't disagree because that's what he is. Putty in Dream's

hands. Molding to whatever shape Dream wants. He's completely at Dream's mercy and yet, this vulnerability is strangely not new to him. Quite the opposite, in fact; George feels like Dream has held this power over him for a long time.

The realizations stop there, at least for now.

The tip of one finger breaches George's tight entrance and he flinches in Dream's hold. An apology gets kissed into his hair, the hand on his cock now moving again to distract him from the pain, and slowly, George relaxes. The spit is nowhere near enough of a lubricant for the friction, but Dream's extra precautionary measures serve well in helping George deal with the initial jolts of pain. It's not long before George finds himself shifting his hips back to meet the shallow thrusts of Dream's finger.

Only when Dream tries to push in another finger does the stretch become momentarily unbearable. George moves one hand back, nails digging into Dream's forearm, and the taller man stops his actions, save for the hand on George's cock that carries on with its careful strokes. "Do you want to stop?" Dream asks and his voice is so soft—his touch is so gentle—that George feels something in him crumble.

He shakes his head, loosening his grip on Dream's arm, and instead pushes himself back on Dream's fingers, letting them reach deeper inside and *oh*. The pleasure hits him full force, causing him to cave in and choke on a moan that bubbles in his throat. When Dream's lips find his shoulder blade again, George notices the way they've curved to fit a satisfied smile. All he can do is tremble and plead—he craves to feel that intrusion again, *needs* to have Dream press against that nook. In the midst of all his begging, Dream trails his lips back up to George's ear and George marvels at how shy Dream sounds when he asks, "Am I making you feel good?"

Dream knows the answer.

How can he not? George writhing in his arms, bucking *up* into his loose fist and bucking *down* onto his nimble fingers, left no room for misunderstandings. It's crystal clear to George that Dream wants to hear him compliment him. Dream may be confident, but with that confidence comes hunger. He needs praise and George is there to satiate him.

"So good," George responds, voice heavy with lust, and Dream rewards him with a particularly hard thrust. With an audible bang, George's head hits the door, the pleasure from Dream caressing that special bundle of nerves inside of him being too much for him to handle. *Fuck it*, George thinks, and surrenders his mouth to the lewd devil that sin has fostered inside of him. "So, so, *so* good, Clay. Love having your fingers inside of me, stretching me out. They're so big, *fuck*."

Dream lets him babble about how good he's fucking him, how amazing it feels to have his fingers finally inside of him. Finally is an odd term because while George wants to say he's never fantasized about this scenario in particular, he definitely has thought about it. Maybe that's considered fantasizing. He doesn't really know.

"You're doing so well," George manages to say and he feels Dream's fingers stutter inside of him before fixing their rhythm, only much, *much* faster now. His head tips back, lolling against Dream's shoulder, and his dilated irises meet Dream's sage green pair. "Do you like that?" He asks with a small smirk on his face.

Dream purses his lips together and looks away, but the fist around George's cock picks up a pace that matches the fingers drilling inside of him. George thinks Dream looks extra beautiful with a blush spread across his face, but something tells him that his own cheeks are much redder. His eyes roll back in his head every now and then, showing just how much of a goner he truly is, and Dream continues to push him closer and closer to the edge.

A tight knot begins to form at the pit of his stomach and George clenches uncontrollably around Dream's fingers, an action that causes the younger man to snap his eyes back towards him. There's two reasons he does that or at least two that George can think of: he's reminding George to ask for permission and—this one is George's glimmer of hope speaking—he likes watching George cum; he thinks George is *pretty* when he cums.

"Need to cum," George gasps, not sure how much longer he can hold off his impending climax. Dream tuts, unsatisfied, and George *breaks*. "Please, Clay. Please let me cum, I *need* it, Clay, *please*." Still, Dream refuses.

The begging seems to fall on deaf ears because Dream is still harsh and relentless with his touches. His fingers spread apart and bend inside of George, leaving no crevice untouched, and his fist jerks George's twitching cock, edging him until tears push down George's cheeks. "Are you scared?" Dream's taunt is muffled in George's hair and all George can do is moan out a short warning that he can't hold back anymore.

Finally satisfied, Dream presses a sweet kiss to the side of George's head and grants him silent permission.

Dream's name falls from George's lips like a mantra when he's finally tipped over the edge and he releases into Dream's hand with a long sigh of relief. Some of his mess taints his stomach and the door in front of him, but George is too fucked out to care, only registering Dream pulling his fingers out of him. He quivers, hole fluttering as if it doesn't want the emptiness that Dream is gifting him, and then goes limp in Dream's hold. Behind him, the younger man chuckles, messily wiping his right palm on George's stained pants.

It's now that George should bring up the questions that are spilling from his heart. It's now that he should ask Dream what he thinks of him and what they are and what they'll become. Now, when Dream is holding him and taking care of him like whatever's happening between them is real—like it's no longer just some twisted game.

But he can't find the courage.

“Come on,” Dream whispers gently, both hands stationing themselves on George's hips and carefully guiding him backwards until they reach the bed. He sits George down on the edge and then fetches tissues to clean him up before repeating the same, thorough actions on the door. “Karl's going to kill us,” Dream laughs, tossing out the soiled tissues. George scrunches his nose and waits patiently for Dream to retrieve clean clothes for him. Dream does just that, but not without pressing on, “So, you're not calling the guy, right?” He holds George's clothes high above the brunet's head, refusing to give them over until George answers.

“Watch me,” George replies, frustrated after not being able to snatch his clothes out of Dream's hand after a few lame attempts. As soon as he grabs his forgotten phone, he hears rustling in front of him and instinctually turns his head to pinpoint the source of the noise.

Dream has tossed his own shirt somewhere behind him. He scoffs when George's eyes rake up and down his body and he drops George's new clothes onto the bed. George groans, glancing down at his phone, then up at Dream, who has begun to palm his prominent bulge in front of him. The blonde also has the frustrating audacity to look smug, as if he's already won.

“You're an asshole,” is all George says before placing his phone down and dropping to his knees in front of Dream.

Chapter End Notes

I apologize for the long wait! Finished an 80 page university paper this weekend. Not the best of times, but I'm glad it's over.

In order to make it up to you guys, I made sure this chapter was Extra long.. totaling up to over 10,000 words. After lots of consideration and reading a bunch of feedback, I decided that giving you all George's pov would be a fun thing to do. This chapter had a lot of plot points, so I'm sorry if anything feels rushed. :')

As always, thank you all for the amazing support and I love hearing your thoughts! :]
+ Here's my [twitter](#) where I post updates and wips! Feel free to follow and start up a conversation with me.

Taunting Masks

Chapter Summary

In some sick, twisted way, George could very much be the Eros of this story, although he has no need for arrows. He could effortlessly cause anyone to fall in love with him and be willing to do anything for him. Dream isn't the first of many and he won't be the last, either.

Chapter Notes

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Not to state the obvious, but George is beautiful.

Dream knows this; trust him, he knows. It's not a matter of angles or lighting with George, nor is it the outfit he's worn for the day or how he carries himself. He's just naturally beautiful and it's no wonder that their fans always paint him as Aphrodite's child. (Speaking of which, he had said George was Hera's child on stream as a *joke*. Either way, his fans must've known that or didn't care about his input because there had been a whole rebellion against it. They weren't wrong, of course, Dream just finds it funny.)

The reason he's bringing this up is stupid really. Dream is aware that anyone that's ever been fortunate enough to lay their eyes on George would immediately be won over by his beauty. It's not something George can really control. He's attractive and people will do what they always do when they see an attractive person: stare.

However, Dream thinks George is the most beautiful when he's like this. On his knees, with his lips bruised and swollen, pupils dilated and cheeks a rosy pink. There's also Dream's cum splattered across his face and Dream's bite marks on his shoulder, but those are just extra details really.

There's something so alluring about seeing George dripping with sin. The sight feels almost forbidden, as if God would've never wanted someone to see his greatest creation swimming in lust, but perhaps that's what makes the sight so unforgettable. Dream wants to see it over and over again—wants the image to be burned in his mind so deeply he's able to revisit the memory in his

dreams.

And he doesn't want to share this sight with anyone else.

"Tilt your head up," Dream whispers, rubbing his mess off of George's forehead with a damp towel. His chest tightens when George looks up at him and does as he's told, so trusting and obedient, just for him.

Just for me.

"You can go if you want," he finds himself saying. "On the date. It's not my place to tell you what you can or can't do. I was just—" *just what?* "—worried I guess."

He pulls his hand away and outlines George's facial structure with his eyes, making sure he didn't miss any spots, before letting their gazes meet. George is already staring at him, staring *through* him, with an expression that's unreadable.

"I probably won't go," George shrugs, busying himself with fixing his clothes.

Dream stares at him silently. There's guilt lingering inside of him, but it's easily overpowered by relief—maybe even happiness—and he hates himself for it. He hates being this selfish.

He's staring pretty noticeably, so when George looks at him again, he doesn't bother pretending as if he wasn't. Instead he waits, he's not sure for what, but he waits.

"He's not my type," George elaborates.

Dream raises an eyebrow, "Then what is?" His question is sincere, but thankfully, it's the kind he can still play off as a joke if George finds it weird.

George snorts, rolling his eyes heavenward, "Wouldn't you like to know."

Dream's not sure what that's supposed to mean. Of *course* he'd like to know. They're best friends,

shouldn't they at least know this much about each other? Maybe Dream's curious for other reasons too, selfish reasons, but that doesn't negate their friendship. Does it?

"I can feel you thinking from here."

"Sorry," Dream apologizes, though he's not sure why. He reaches in his drawer for some sweats, coming across his last clean pair, and tugs them on. George sighs from behind him and Dream feels the need to speak again. "You don't have to answer if you don't want to."

"I don't have a type," George answers. It's too blunt not to be honest, but that only serves to make Dream even more confused. "I don't think I ever have. I end up liking whoever I like."

Dream nods, pretending to understand. George rarely ever talks about his past relationships and when he develops a crush on someone, nobody figures it out until George has already secured a date. Dream remembers the last time George had talked to him about something of the sorts; it had left a sour taste on his tongue and he couldn't pinpoint why.

Well, now he's got that bit figured out.

"How about you?" George asks, relaxing against the pillows that are lined up along the headboard.

Dream pauses at that.

His type, huh? He's never really thought about it either, if he's going to be honest. He's only ever been in a handful of relationships and that's because once he settles down, he *settles down*. He's loyal and he does everything and anything to make a relationship work. Many people find that admirable, but Dream finds it his biggest weakness.

Because while he does have long lasting relationships thanks to his unwavering commitment, it also means he ties himself to toxicity far longer than he should. If his exes have taught him anything, it's that he needs to learn to be more careful with his heart—to be ready to leave when necessary, to be wary about giving someone his all.

Yet, here he is, presenting himself in his entirety to George on a silver platter.

“Shorter than me,” he says, after finding a commonality.

“You’re 6’3, freak,” George snickers. “That means 98% of the human population is your type.”

“Has a sense of humor,” Dream continues after tossing George a quick glare. “I need to get along with them easily, so probably someone that I’m already friends with.”

George’s lips part, like he wants to say something, but he shuts them just as quick and gestures for Dream to continue. Dream shakes his head, “No, please, what do you have to say, my ever so wise love guru?”

“Shut up,” George laughs and then a small smirk forms on his face, full of mirth. “I was going to say that by ‘get along with them easily’ you mean they need to agree with you all the time. Your ego is too big to listen to anyone else.” Dream wants to protest, but George leaves no room for him to do so. “I think a good argument every now and then— well, maybe not an argument, but a little debate—is healthy. Someone needs to get you off your high horse.”

Dream purses his lips to the side. Leave it to George to point out his flaws and guise it as a joke. He knows George isn’t doing this to insult him, though it would seem that way to an outsider.

“Well, first of all, I wouldn’t necessarily say I’m *that* argumentative.”

“See!” George giggles triumphantly and Dream scowls.

“Okay, anyway,” he groans and then rethinks the next trait he was going to list. Kindness is a big one, but maybe that’s too obvious. “Yeah, someone that’s honest I guess.”

George regains his composure and speaks with a mock serious tone. “Continue.”

“I’d rather have someone who’s blunt than someone who sugarcoats things,” Dream mumbles, scratching the nape of his neck. “I’m impulsive, I like being right—I think I *am* right most of the time, even when it’s clear that I’m not.”

He remembers all the times he’s almost made a dumb decision and had to have George reel him

back like a dog on a leash.

One time, he had spent an entire night fighting off the urge to call his ex. After a week of struggling to let go, he nearly crawled back to what broke him. He had asked multiple people what they thought and they had told him what he wanted to hear: they were so perfect together, they had been through so much already, they could fix this—repair the damage

Even Sapnap had urged him to try, just once more, if he really had to—if it was his last resort—and Dream had thought it was.

There was a reason he hadn't told George and it was the same reason why Sapnap *had* .

Around midnight, while he was staring at the contact on his phone he couldn't bring himself to delete, George had called him. He had considered not answering because he knew that George would argue with him and he didn't have the energy to deal with that.

However, he also knew that George was too stubborn to give up after a rejected phone call, so he answered.

Within the first minute, George had called him every insult he could possibly think of and the anger that had boiled inside of Dream was immeasurable. They spent the next hour shouting at each other with no care for their neighbors. George had laid down insult after insult, both about Dream and his ex, and Dream had countered each and everyone with an excuse of a defense. When George began listing all the obstacles Dream had faced and the problems he endured, Dream had started blindly cursing him out, and both of them refused to break down.

It wasn't until they had grown tired of yelling that George had said, "*You know I'm right,*" and he had sounded so sure of himself that Dream couldn't disagree.

"So, as much as I would like someone who agrees with me on everything, it's not what I need. I need someone who—," Dream pauses, trying to find the right words. "I need someone who isn't afraid to go against me. Someone who understands me, but sees things differently than I do."

Something shifts in the air around them. If Dream hadn't been waiting for a reaction from George, he would've probably missed the way his smile had faltered, but he sees it and he's unsure of what to make of it.

“Just sounds like you’re trying to replace me,” George teases. He doesn’t chuckle like he normally does after cracking a joke and Dream, being the overthinker that he is, would have probably read deeper into it.. if he wasn’t so torn up over the word ‘replace’.

How can he replace something—someone—he’s never *had* in the first place?

“I’d never do that,” Dream says and it’s too sincere for either of them to shrug off, especially when Dream is frowning with so much distaste for the thought. “You really think I’d do that?”

George rushes to answer, “I don’t.” Then again, quietly, “You know I don’t.”

He seems put off by Dream’s sudden display of emotion, but Dream thinks his reaction is justified. The shirt that Dream pulls on over his head hides his face for a moment and in that millisecond, Dream allows his frown to deepen and then disappear.

“I think it’s sweet,” George adds, a bit frantic to win over Dream’s forgiveness. “That your ideal type is kind of like me. I’d like to think that means we’ll be best friends for a long time.”

George drops his gaze, drawing his knees to his chest, and he appears smaller than he usually is. The warm smile from earlier returns to his face. “I wanna be by your side that long,” he mumbles bashfully and Dream thinks it’s ridiculous that George thinks there exists a timeline for them where that isn’t the case. “Besides, someone has to take your future partner’s side when you two argue, right?”

“You’re such an idiot,” Dream groans, giving George a look that’s both irritated and fond. He expects George to stick his tongue out, laugh, do anything to drag on the teasing, but George sits there, staring idly at the linen sheets underneath him.

“I think I’m the same,” George whispers. It’s so quiet that Dream almost feels like he shouldn’t be listening. “I think my ideal type, if I were to have one, would be a lot like you.”

The feelings that greet Dream in the next second all contradict one another. There’s an invisible weight being pushed down onto his chest and yet, Dream feels freer than he ever has. The air gets pushed out of his lungs, and he inhales sharply out of instinct, but he’s still out of breath. He’s light-headed and grounded at the same time.

“Really?” He asks, fingers trembling as they curl inwards to form small fists.

“Yeah,” George admits. They dance around the silence, stealing glances at one another, and Dream entertains the fact that maybe, just maybe, he has a chance. Perhaps things aren’t as bleak as they seem.

“Have you heard that tiktok audio,” George mutters under his breath with a scoff and Dream stares blankly at him.

“That tiktok audio,” Dream repeats. George nods, not realizing what’s wrong with what he’s said. “Yes, because that’s so specific.”

“Oh,” George blinks. “Shut up. I mean that one everyone tags us in. The..” he trails off with a laugh, pressing a hand to his face. If Dream isn’t mistaken, George almost seems shy. “Six feet tall one.”

Dream can’t help the bark of laughter that escapes him. Leave it to George to not only know a tiktok that relates to the situation they’re in, but also to bring it up.

“You’re unbelievable,” Dream’s body shakes from just how hard he’s laughing. “It’s a song, not just a tiktok audio, you little idiot, and yes I’ve heard it. Are you saying that’s your type? Because that song could basically have my name as the title.”

It appears that George is *not* in the mood for jokes, however, because Dream gets sniped with a pillow. “I’m being serious,” his attacker states, left hand loaded with another fluffy weapon.

Dream doesn’t know what to say. “That’s okay,” he cringes inwardly at himself. “I mean, you like what you like.”

“Right,” George agrees, threading his eyebrows together. He seems confused, almost perplexed. “Is that all you have to say?”

“I’m supposed to say more?” Dream asks and he regrets the words as soon as they leave his mouth because they make him seem disinterested. “Not like that,” he grimaces. “I mean—well. I didn’t

know you liked criers.” He hopes that George realizes he’s referencing another line from the song. “You always ask me to *save you* when people cry in front of you.”

“That’s different,” George sighs, kicking his legs out. “Crybabies and attention seekers are a no-no. I want someone who isn’t afraid to show their emotions, you know?”

“You barely show your own emotions,” Dream points out and it’s not ill-mannered, but George pouts at him like it is. “Don’t give me that face. It’s the truth. I think you’d have a hard time handling someone like that.”

“I handle you just fine.”

“That’s different,” Dream says. “We’re friends.” *You don’t like me like that.*

“How is that any different? It’s still dealing with an emotional person,” George replies, tilting his head to the side.

Dream shifts his weight from one leg to the other absentmindedly while he struggles to think of the best explanation. “Well, as friends, you’re obligated to comfort me when I’m upset,” he says, half-joking. “In a relationship, it’s more complicated. You can’t expect them to be vulnerable around you if you’re not vulnerable around them too. Trust has to be a mutual thing.”

“I trust you,” George says, still sounding confused, but this time also argumentative.

“Again,” Dream sighs, running a hand through his hair. “We’re friends.” It should be left at that, but slowly, one by one, the words he was searching for come to him. “Even then, you can be so hesitant. Sometimes I have no idea what you’re thinking about or how you feel, George. It’s always like solving a riddle when it comes to you.”

Dream is careful not to raise his voice. As frustrated as he is, he knows better than to yell about something like this.

“I know you like dealing with things on your own,” he continues. “I’m not saying you have to tell me your life story or that you have to open yourself inside out, but it would be nice to hear why you’re upset instead of playing a guessing game. Especially when you’re upset with *me* .”

The doorbell rings and it echoes through the house. Both of them have the opportunity to exit the room, mutter something about answering the door and leave the conversation at that, but neither of them do.

“I appreciate that you’re always here for me, George, I do. That’s why I wanna do the same for you. I wanna be someone you know you can always run to, no matter what the circumstances are. I want you to trust me. To *really* trust me.”

“Dre- Clay,” George calls out and Dream almost thinks he hears desperation in his voice, but he’s not given enough time to think things through.

“Dream!” Sarnap’s voice booms from downstairs and Dream snaps his head to the door. “It’s for you!”

There’s laughter and giggles that follow the announcement and Dream dreads whoever or whatever is waiting for him at the front door. He heaves a long sigh, hand hesitating to reach for the door knob.

“I’ll go with you,” George offers quietly and Dream shoots him an appreciative smile before opening the door.

He waits an extra second for George to catch up and then they descend the flight of stairs together. Right before he opens the front door, George yanks him back and shoves something at him. A mask.

“Nimrod,” George laughs as Dream hurriedly secures the fabric on his face. “Where would you be without me?”

I can’t imagine being without you.

Dream opens the door, peeking just the upper half of his head out to see who the visitor is. He’s sure that it’s someone he’s already met because there’s no way Sarnap would let them see Dream if that weren’t the case and sure enough, standing on the porch is the girl from the get-together earlier.

“Uh,” Dream begins intelligibly, “Hi?”

He opens the door just enough for most of his body to show, not wanting to be rude, and that seems to ease her nerves. Dream is anything but relaxed himself and his grip on the knob is so tight, his knuckles are probably turning white.

“Hi. I’m Alex, from the party.”

“*What?!*” Their Alex hollers, giving away the fact that he’s eavesdropping, and if *he’s* eavesdropping, that means the other’s probably are too.

“Alex,” Dream repeats, pretending not to recall the name. Playing dumb usually gets him out of uncomfortable situations, but that doesn’t seem to work this time.

“They called me Lexie,” she clarifies, giggling nervously. Dream realizes that she’s a lot more sober than she was a few hours ago, which is a relief, but that doesn’t make him any more enthusiastic to talk to her. “I wanted to apologize.”

“For?”

It’s obvious what she’s alluding too, but Dream hasn’t lost hope in his ‘play dumb to win’ strategy just yet. His discomfort must really show because next to him, George stirs. He places a hand over Dream’s and gently pulls it away from the knob so that Dream doesn’t hurt himself.

“For giving you that,” Lexie points at Dream’s neck where her lipstick stains probably remain, bracketing the blossoming purple bruise. “I wasn’t thinking straight because of the alcohol and I completely misread the situation.”

“It’s okay,” Dream says. “Don’t worry about it.” And then he’s ready to close the door and never see her again, but she stops him by placing a hand on the door. That’s a red flag.

“I thought you were interested in me,” she continues and Dream laughs awkwardly because he doesn’t want to offend her. She is by no means unattractive, objectively speaking, but Dream’s heart is way, *way* too preoccupied to entertain someone else.

“It’s seriously okay,” he repeats, gently pushing the door again to try and drop the hint that he’s done with the conversation. “It happens.”

“I should’ve asked,” Lexie says and Dream agrees with that. “I just thought you were really cute and I guess the alcohol tripped me into thinking you were staring at me too.” He, really, really doesn’t like where this is going. “I hope you can forgive me and—if I haven’t completely ruined my chances—I’d really wanna start over.”

Start *what* over? Dream stares at her, completely dumbfounded.

The door swings open and at first Dream is alarmed because he thinks Lexie is trying to barge in and stake her claim (again), but then he sees that she’s no longer touching the door.

He turns his head slowly.

“Look,” George says, now standing in clear view of the doorway. Plastered on his face is the most bored expression Dream has ever seen on him and yet George still manages to look alarmingly lethal. Dream’s heart does a stupid hiccup. “You said it yourself: you misread the situation. I think it’s best if you hold onto the little dignity that you have left and leave.”

“*Oh shit!*” Sapnap howls from the kitchen.

“Excuse me?” Lexie finally manages to say after a few seconds of gaping at George, clearly taken aback by his rude introduction. Dream tries his best to mask his emotions, but on the inside, he’s just as surprised. “And who the fuck are you?”

George takes a step forward, deliberately moving in front of Dream in such a way that Dream’s elbow hooks against the sleeve of George’s shirt (which is technically his). The corner of the shirt slips off of George’s shoulder and Dream almost melts into a puddle of embarrassment when the constellation of hickies comes into view.

“See I don’t understand why that matters,” George replies nonchalantly, aware of the way Lexie’s eyes drag down his neck and over his shoulder blade. He raises a hand, fixing his shirt with a smirk tugged on his lips, and Lexie’s eyes snap up to meet his. “I’m telling you to leave because you’re going to embarrass yourself. Doesn’t matter who I am, it just matters if I’m right or not, and I think we both know that I’m right.”

“He’s a grown man, he can speak for himself.”

Dream’s eyes widen at that and he takes a step behind George before he can even stop himself. Over six foot tall and he’s cowering behind someone half a foot shorter. Amazing.

“Mm,” George hums mockingly, nodding along, but not really caring about what she has to say. “And you’re a grown woman, but you couldn’t ask him for his consent earlier. Maybe if someone spoke on your behalf too, we wouldn’t be in this situation, right?”

“*True!*” Karl shouts and this time, Dream turns around to actually flip the trio off. They engage in a fierce battle of facial expressions, but Dream is highly disadvantaged because half his face is covered.

Dream has half zoned out of the conversation by now. He’s far too competitive to be defeated by Karl, Sapnap, and Quackity in the game they’ve just made up on the spot. He hears George and Lexie talking behind him, but he doesn’t pay much attention because it’s obvious George has everything under control.

That is until George appears in front of him, one hand reaching up to violently tug the mask down until it cups under Dream’s chin. Dream barely has the time to register what happened, let alone panic, because George is pulling *him* down as well and their lips are clashing messily.

In front of everyone.

Dream’s eyes remain wide open, lips tentatively moving against George’s, but the kiss is short-lived anyway. George readjusts Dream’s mask once he pulls away and then Dream finds himself behind turned around to face Lexie, whose face is the same shade of red as Dream’s. His left arm gets tugged on with so much force, he ends up angled awkwardly towards George.

“See, darling, I don’t think I need to feel threatened by you,” George states, way too smug for someone whose heart is practically leaping out of his chest. Dream can feel the accelerated beating of George’s heart against his arm; it’s almost as fast as his. “Bye.”

The door closes before Dream can even say his own goodbye, not that he really cares, and then George is pulling away from him and burying his face into his hands. A complete 180 in character.

Three pairs of footsteps race down the hall to meet them by the door. Dream doesn't pay them any attention, still staring at George with so much confusion because there's so much that just happened that he doesn't have an explanation for.

"First of all, fuck you for finding another Alex," Alex jabs a finger at Dream's chest. "Second of all, *damn* George!"

"For real!" Karl seconds with a high-pitched giggle. "I didn't know you had it in you, Gogy."

"Don't even," George groans, lowering his arms with much, much reluctance.

Dream is absolutely *floored* by the sight. George's face is red, redder than it's possibly ever been, and the tips of his ears are burning in a shade that's even darker. He's nibbling on the corner of his lip and staring at the floor, hands balled into tiny fists at his side.

Cute, adorable, endearing—none of these words give the sight any justice. They're all understatements.

"You look like," Sapnap squints at the Brit. "Pre-ketchup."

"Pre- do you mean a fucking tomato?" Alex asks with the most unamused look he can muster. "Pre-ketchup? Are you shitting me right now?"

Amid their childish banter and chaotic laughter, the group moves from the hall into the living room. Sapnap drapes himself over the couch and Karl lifts the younger man's legs to sit down before placing them back down over his lap, Alex sprawls out on the floor, George occupies the sofa, and Dream stands awkwardly by the archway that separates the room from the kitchen.

From this angle, he can observe all of his friends without having to constantly turn his head. Dream likes observing his friends and he's just a very observant person in general.

His eyes gravitate towards George over time. He watches as George continues to shift and turn on the sofa, trying to find the most comfortable position, and he sees George's fingers dance along the armrest, curing him of his momentary boredom whenever the group falls into a silence.

“Hey, Edward Cullen,” Alex snickers, catching Dream in the act of raking his eyes down George’s legs, which are now thrown over the armrest. “Come join us.”

He hesitates at first, but slowly walks towards them, sitting on the carpet next to Alex. Alex, still spread out on the floor in prime ‘making a snow angel’ position, smiles up at him. Dream squints with suspicion, but before he can utter anything, he feels a tug to the collar of his shirt.

“Hm?” he says, turning his head, and George waves with his hand, motioning for him to scoot closer. Dream pushes himself towards the sofa until he feels the cushioned surface pressed against his back. “What is it?”

“Nothing,” George shakes his head and Dream shrugs, dismissing their brief exchange in lieu of watching Sapnap flinch everytime Karl pinches his calves.

Alex mutters something under his breath that Dream can’t quite catch, so he places his hands on the ground, getting ready to push himself closer. Before he can get the chance, he hears George shift behind him and then his shoulders are locked in place by his best friend’s knees.

Dream freezes and then slowly moves his hands back up, resting them on his lap. “Okay,” he says quietly, but George doesn’t move his legs.

“Sorry, did you wanna move?” George asks and Dream feels nimble fingers sift through his blonde hair, over and under, in and out.

Dream shakes his head ‘no’, but the movement is minimal. He doesn’t want to accidentally cause George to stop playing with his hair. Thankfully, George picks up on Dream’s nonverbal response and continues his small ministrations.

Karl’s gaze lands on them and Dream expects him to make a teasing remark, but it leaves as quickly as it arrives.

Dream wishes Karl had said something. Anything. Just to make things feel less.. normal.

Because it feels domestic, sitting there and letting George card his fingers through his hair as they silently bask in each other’s presence. It makes Dream’s heart swell with desire because this is all he wants.

Therefore, it's ironic that he feels the need to run away from it.

The way his friends carry on with their conversation, not batting an eye at him and George, makes him feel like he can make this a reality and playing into those fantasies is a dangerous, dangerous game. Dream has indulged in his selfish desires far too much already. He knows where he and George stand, even if the lines have blurred and crossed over a few times too many.

They're friends.

He said this earlier when they were talking about their ideal types as a reminder for himself and George hadn't done anything to suggest otherwise. He hadn't agreed either, but sometimes an absence of words speaks loudest.

And with George, that's almost always the case.

"Dream," George mumbles, snapping Dream out of his thoughts as if he can hear them. "Take a shower."

Dream frowns, raising an arm to sniff himself. "Is that an insult?"

"A little. Your hair is getting greasy." George laughs with his fingers still twirling around dirty blonde locks. "But if it offends you that much, then consider it an invitation."

All eyes land on Dream after he chokes on his spit and gets sent into a coughing fit. George moves his hand out of Dream's hair and places it flat on the taller man's back instead. Dream loathes the innocent facade George puts up as he asks him what's wrong while he massages Dream's tense muscles.

There's a strain in Dream's throat when he answers. "Fine." He contemplates turning around and threatening to strangle George.

Knowing him, he'd probably like it.

“George,” Sapnap calls out mid-yawn. “I’ve been meaning to ask.. aren’t you afraid she’s gonna babble about you and Dream?”

Dream perks up at this, turning slightly so that he can look up at George without hurting his neck. He’d been meaning to ask the same question, but George’s existence could be quite the distraction.

“If anything, it’s her word against mine,” George replies with a shrug. “I also checked to make sure nobody was around, so there’s no proof. I doubt anyone could even see Dream though, he wasn’t facing the door.”

“There’s definitely gonna be people who encourage her, if she talks about it,” Alex scoffs, stretching his arms over his head. “I doubt people will believe the story, but don’t expect them to be shocked if they ever find out the truth.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Dream asks, relaxing against the bottom half of the sofa again. George doesn’t reach out to play with his hair again and Dream fights away a pout.

Alex waves dismissively and Karl answers on his behalf, “Whatever you want it to mean.”

“Nobody’s gonna buy it, trust me,” George reassures them. “Not even antis and they buy everything.” Sapnap snorts at that. “Dream wasn’t even facing the door. How are people gonna know it’s him if by some *miraculous* chance they get proof?”

“Right,” Alex agrees and then sits up so quickly, his hat nearly falls off. “The odds of people figuring it out are 1 in 7.5 trillion.”

“Not funny,” Dream says at the same time Karl calls the joke ‘overused’.

“I wouldn’t say the odds are that bad, honestly,” Sapnap scoffs and Dream looks away when his best friend’s eyes meet him.

Sapnap’s intent behind looking at him the way he did is obvious. He’s trying to convey a message because he knows Dream will understand, but Dream doesn’t want to listen to what Sapnap has to say right now. It’s probably something along the lines of pushing him to stop being ‘cowardly’, but what more can Dream do? Pull out a bouquet of flowers, get down on one knee, and serenade their other best friend?

Dream looks up at Sapnap again out of habit. Sapnap drills into him.

Yes.

With a loud groan, Dream drags a palm down his face. It earns him a weird look from Karl and a squeeze on the shoulder from George, so he mumbles that he's fine.

Alex doesn't let him off the hook easily. "That was obscene," he says jokingly, making a face and looking off into the distance as if a camera was panning in on him. "I don't think I should be here." Dream thinks that's the end of it and begins to curse him out, but Alex cuts him off. "Seriously, George. I don't know how you can listen to that all the time."

"Oh *fuck off!*" Dream shouts with a laugh and Karl tosses him a cushion to give him ammunition. The time he spent playing football in his adolescence comes in handy and he hurls the cushion at Alex with so much strength, the younger man almost falls back on the ground. "Yeah, that's what you get, dickhead."

"I'm gonna make you regret that, asshole!"

"Try me! Try me, you little," Dream's mind draws a blank. "Cocksucker!"

"*What?*" Alex and Karl both wheeze at the same time in disbelief. Their fits of giggles blend together which only encourages them to laugh louder and louder.

"Boys," Sapnap chides playfully, wagging a finger at them. "Settle down."

Alex ignores Sapnap without hesitation and continues his conversation with Dream, "If anything I should be calling *you* that."

"I would shut up if I were you," Sapnap advises with a laugh, reaching behind his head to pull out the cushion underneath. "He could get on his knees and he'd still be taller than you. He'd definitely beat you in a fight." With a snort, Sapnap tosses the pillow to Dream who catches it with one hand and Alex gives him a silent look of betrayal. "What? You deserve it!"

Dream decides to spare Alex from another attack, instead hugging the cushion to his chest. George stifles a laugh behind him and Dream tilts his head back to look up at the brunet. “What?”

George shakes his head, “You’re cute.”

He leans down, his face mere inches away from Dream’s, and pushes a hand on the cushion that rests in the blonde’s arms. Dream tightens his arms around the object instinctively, preventing George from stealing it—if that was his intention.

It wasn’t.

“You look so small holding this,” George laughs fondly, shaking his head. His fringe falls above his eyes.

Dream narrows his eyes at him, “That’s just because of the angle. I’m on the floor, you’re on a chair a couple feet above the ground.”

“You also looked small when you were hiding behind me earlier.”

“Okay? And you looked small when you were on your kn—”

“*No!*” Sapnap shouts and this time, Dream’s the one that gets knocked on the head with a couch cushion. Thankfully, it’s the last one they have available. “We do *not* wanna hear about those things, dude. Keep it in the DMs.”

“We’re talking, not texting,” George scoffs, leaning back so that he’s comfortably resting against the sofa again.

“Then change that,” Sapnap fires back without hesitation.

Dream can practically see their surroundings morph into a battleground as the childish bickering begins to increase in volume. He’s really not sure how he’s the oldest one out of the three and he’s

also not sure how people (other than him) can put up with it. Heck, even he—who has been best friends with both of them for a long, *long* time—can find it vexing. Don't get him wrong, the banter is usually funny and light-hearted.

But sometimes it can be irritable or reach a point of no return. Dream fears that this might be one of those moments.

“Funny how nobody was talking to you,” George says in that voice he always uses when he's purposely trying to confuse people. It sounds too serious to be a joke and yet that's all the more reason for it to be considered one.

“Funny how I don't recall anybody wanting to hear about your sex life,” Sapnap replies, draping an arm over his eyes to appear nonchalant.

“And I don't recall asking for your opinion.”

“You sure as hell wanted my opinion last night when you were-”

“Can both of you shut up? Please?” Dream sighs, pinching the bridge of his nose. “You're making Karl and Alex nervous.”

Again, Dream is an observant guy. Not only that, but his love language is quality time, so it's to no surprise that he's spent a *lot* of time with everyone in this room, be it in group meetings or in one-on-one settings. When you put those two things together, you get the fact that Dream knows many, many things about his friends. One of those many things is knowing how they act when they're nervous.

Alex had been shifting his gaze from face to face, lips slightly parted, and Karl had a half-smile on his face, not daring to let it reach his eyes.

“Whatever,” Sapnap turns his wrist in the air, waving dismissively.

For a second, Dream sees a clearance in the battlefield.

George tears away the peaceful scenery, “He started it.”

“Are you fucking kidding-”

“I’m not lying-”

“*How about,*” Dream interjects again. This time he’s slightly louder. “We just decide what we’re ordering for dinner? Anybody hungry? I’m famished.”

He takes Sapnap’s shrug as a sign of cooperation and then turns his head to see George’s response. George parts his lips and from the look in his eyes, Dream can tell that he’s got another snarky remark to make, so he reacts quickly and places a hand on George’s thigh and *squeezes*.

“George.”

He doesn’t mean to slip his tone an octave lower, especially knowing how George reacts to it: flustered, fidgety. It gives him an unfair leverage, George always says, so Dream tries to avoid using it too much. Partly to appease George and partly to enforce its power (because the more he uses it, the greater the chances of George becoming used to it). However, sometimes it comes out naturally when he feels his frustration growing.

Like right now.

“Behave.”

The effect is almost instantaneous. George folds his arms over his chest and turns his upper torso away in favor of facing the wall instead of Dream. “Hate when you do that,” he hisses, still sounding argumentative, but Dream knows his body language well enough to tell that he’s surrendering. “I’m not a fucking child.”

“Then stop acting like one,” Dream says without really considering the weight of his words. Fortunately, George doesn’t snap back.

“Ha!” Sapnap barks, sitting up straight so that he has a better view of George sulking in defeat.

“Good one, Dream!”

“Not so fast. That goes for you too,” Dream rolls his eyes and Sapnap mutters something along the lines of ‘touché’, but Dream ignores him.

“So,” Karl coughs and then pats Sapnap’s thigh. “Everyone okay with Chipotle?”

“Good with me!” Alex chirps eagerly. “You read my mind, honestly. I’ve had enough pizza for a fucking lifetime.”

Dream scoffs at that and gives Karl a curt nod. He doesn’t catch George’s response or the face that Sapnap makes, but judging by Karl’s reactions, he guesses that they’ve both agreed. Karl snaps his fingers and makes a thumbs up before wiggling in his seat to retrieve his phone from his back pocket. Sapnap rolls off of the couch, being careful not to kick Karl with his legs, and then pushes himself up off the ground.

“George,” Sapnap calls out while stretching his arms over his head and Dream hears the brunet behind him hum curiously. “Can you help me fix the code for my stream? It keeps glitching out when I shift.”

It’s a wonder how they can go from coming for one another’s necks to inseparable best friends in the span of just a few minutes.

Dream watches silently as the two of them head up the stairs and towards Sapnap’s room. Sapnap swings an arm around George and George flinches away like a cat that’s been sprayed with water which only causes Sapnap to try again, this time with more determination.

“You deserve a gold medal for dealing with them all the time,” Alex says once the chaotic pair are out of earshot. “I felt like I was at a zoo and a circus at the same time.”

“Tell me about it,” Karl mumbles, pocketing his phone once he’s done ordering. “I didn’t know they were always fighting off stream too. Thought it was a bit.”

Dream shakes his head with a laugh. “Well, to be fair, they’re not always like that,” he replies. “They’re both very childish in nature, but that’s not necessarily a bad thing and at the end of the day, as much as they fight, they *do* love each other.”

“Do you love me, Dream?” Karl asks out of the blue.

If he’s trying to get Dream embarrassed, it doesn’t work. “Of course I do, idiot,” Dream mutters without hesitation.

“How about me Dream, do you love me?” Alex chips in and Dream notices the phone in his hand.

The camera is covered in the most non-discreet way, so Dream feels certain that Alex is recording, but he nods anyway. Once Alex has had his fun and the beep of the phone signals that the recording is over, Karl stops leaning off the edge of the sofa.

“Do you love Sapnap?” Karl asks and Dream gives him an incredulous look.

“Of course I do.”

The question causes Dream to squint because the answer is so obvious that he doesn’t see the point in asking. He’s known Karl long enough to pick up on the fact that he does almost *everything* to fulfill a bigger purpose, but he’s not sure what that purpose is this time. There’s also a chance that maybe he’s wrong and maybe Karl’s *not* preparing something up his sleeve, but the look Karl gives Alex dismisses that thought quickly.

“How about George? Do you love George?”

Dream makes the fatal mistake of hesitating. His reply is a millisecond too slow and he stutters twice in the beginning. There’s no doubt that both Karl and Alex pick up on both these things because Dream’s friends are *also* very observant and *also* know a hefty amount about him.

“What was *that*? You don’t love George?” Alex teases, but Dream is certain that he’s picked up on the implications of his hesitance.

The same goes for Karl who can’t help but glance at the staircase every other second to make sure that nothing that shouldn’t leave the room does.

“You can tell us, Dream,” Alex encourages with a lopsided smirk, looking far too conniving for Dream’s liking. “To be honest, I don’t love George either. I lie to him all the time.”

“I do love him,” Dream reasserts, but his voice quivers due to his wavering confidence. “Of course I love him.”

This is how Dream pins down what his feelings are and of course the countless nights he’d spent staring at the ceiling were all for naught. This is how Dream realizes he’s in love with George. No slow dancing underneath the moonlight, no near-death experience, no chase at an airport.

Just a flimsy joke.

While it makes sense that Dream, who tends to be impulsive and spontaneous, has his moment of realization out of the blue, it’s still frustrating. Especially when Dream can’t help but relate the hilarity of the situation to his relationship with George. Because maybe that’s all this really is: a joke. He knows that’s most likely not the case and that there are things to cherish in these memories, even if it all goes downhill later (and it’s bound to), but Dream wouldn’t be Dream if he weren’t worried.

Karl seems to pick up on Dream’s change in demeanor. “You know we’re here for you, right?” He asks, stretching a leg out to tap Dream’s knee with his ankle. “You can come to us if you need something.”

Dream glances up at him and then at Alex who offers him a small smile. “I know,” he says softly.

The only problem, he wants to say, is that all I need is George. And it’s not like Karl and Alex are going to be able to give him George. At the most, they could whine their hearts out and get the Brit to stand in front of Dream, and that’s not really *giving* him George. Besides, George is always by his side, and the way Dream needs him goes beyond just that.

But he doesn’t want anyone to give him that, he doesn’t want Karl or Alex or even a divine being—if there is one—to be the reason why George wants him. Is it really love if it’s forced upon you? That’s why he’s never understood the power of Eros’ arrows. If he were to pierce George with an arrow, golden or leaden, those feelings wouldn’t be genuine.

However, Dream thinks that if he were to be on the receiving end and even if Eros hit him with one arrow too many, he wouldn’t be able to love anyone other than George nor would be able to stop

loving George. So perhaps, the Gods aren't as powerful as they seem. Or maybe, it had been long since Eros had set his eyes on Dream.

In some sick, twisted way, George could very much be the Eros of this story, although he has no need for arrows. He could effortlessly cause anyone to fall in love with him and be willing to do anything for him. Dream isn't the first of many and he won't be the last, either.

With his devotion and love for George, you could say Dream was his Psyche, but then again, this is all fiction and every alternate universe has its changes. In this version, Psyche would never betray Eros; in this version, Eros would never fall for Psyche. Oddly enough, that would imply that Psyche would be doomed to fall for the most hideous of creatures (per Aphrodite's commands), which is inaccurate, so maybe Dream was never meant to play the role of Psyche.

There had been a time where Dream would've gladly given up these feelings to assure that it wouldn't put his friendship with George at risk. That's no longer the case. He doesn't think he can give up what he feels, not for anything. It's so sickeningly cliché. He's made fun of fictional characters for prioritizing a one-sided love above all, but that's because he had never been in those shoes. He saw it as naive, selfish, stupid, and yet it makes so much sense now. He's been in love before, he has, but not like this.

There isn't anything he wouldn't do for George.

And George deserves to be loved like this, to be pampered, to be someone's first choice no matter the circumstances. Dream is more than happy to be the person giving him all of that, even if it's unrequited.

"Dream?"

Dream jumps in his skin, startled back into reality by Karl's voice. "Yeah?"

"George was calling for you. They probably need help with the code."

"Oh," Dream says, glancing up at the closed door that his best friends were behind. He presses a palm to his face. Sure enough, it's burning. "Yeah, I'll.. okay. Be right back, maybe."

He's usually enthusiastic to see George and even quicker with his steps when George is actively

seeking for him, but this time he tries to walk as slowly as possible without seeming suspicious. He doesn't want the first thing they see when they open the door to be him as a flustered mess because that'll lead to questions Dream doesn't want to answer. Questions that he was *just* able to answer for himself.

Sapnap swings the door open before Dream even gets the chance to knock. His hand stays suspended in the air for a few seconds and then he moves it to the back of his head awkwardly. "You called?"

"Hey handyman," Sapnap chirps and Dream catches the way George rolls his eyes. "Can you help us? Your boyfriend sucks ass at repairing codes."

And maybe it's the lingering vulnerability and fear of being discovered that compels Dream to react the way he does. "He's not my boyfriend," he replies, tone too harsh for it to go unnoticed.

Nobody says anything. Dream hates the silence.

"What's the problem?" He sighs, hunching over the desk to stare at the dimly lit screen of Sapnap's monitor.

"Well if I knew, we wouldn't be asking you for help, would we?" George teases and Dream turns his head to reply with just as much attitude when he realizes just how close George is.

His hair tickles Dream's chin and his arm is outstretched, bicep pressing against Dream's chest. His fingers point at something on the computer and then he moves his hand down to the mouse where Dream's hand rests idly. George doesn't seem to mind. He fits his hand right on top of Dream's, almost like it's not even there, and Dream notices that George's fingers are a knuckle shorter than his.

"Well, I don't know any of this nerdy shit so," Sapnap says from behind them. Dream wants to turn his head, but he's afraid that doing so will cause George to move. "Peace! I'll be back later to call you guys for dinner."

It might seem ridiculous that Sapnap is leaving them to sort things out when the code is for *his* stream, but Dream knows that the younger man has an underlying reason for doing so. It's the same reason behind the look he gave Dream earlier. The *things* he wants them to sort out go beyond javascript.

He knows what Sapnap is asking him to do, he's known for a long time, but he can never bring himself to do it. Today is no different.

But that seems to only be true for him.

"Dream," George mumbles and Dream glances down at him curiously. The brunet readjusts himself to face him, still remaining close.

"We need to talk."

Chapter End Notes

Hi, I'm back!

I was working on a few other wips that you guys might be able to read in the future. However, I came across a BIG writer's block for them and decided to update Summer of Twenty instead of keeping you all waiting longer. ^^"

Hope you guys enjoy the chapter! It's not a big cliffhanger, is it? It can go one of two ways.

Is this considered the climax of the story? Maybe! It's definitely a major plot point though.

Let me know what you guys think! I love reading your comments and whenever I feel unmotivated, I come back to read them. :] Also, come chat with me on [twitter](#). (You can also get snippets for new chapters or information regarding updates there!)

Tidal Waves

Chapter Summary

George's words do lead to Dream's downfall, but instead of plummeting him to his inevitable doom, they suspend him in the air where Fate taunts him, letting him swing like an abandoned pendulum.

Chapter Notes

Here we go again.. E for Explicit!

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“We need to talk.”

Dream hates that phrase.

Well, hate is a strong word and it *is* George that's speaking so maybe Dream's wrong. Maybe he doesn't hate that phrase, maybe he just strongly dislikes it. Much like how he strongly dislikes the situation he's currently in.

Dreads. Fears.

Had George said '*can we talk*' instead of '*we need to talk*', perhaps Dream would be able to breathe a little easier. He knows that they're practically synonymous and that the former is more popular and therefore more despised, but still. There's a very clear difference between the two.

One is phrased like a question. Dream can evade it, ignore it, dismiss it. He doesn't *have* to subjugate himself to whatever anguish follows.

One is phrased like a demand. Firm and final with no room for discussion and Dream has no option other than to nod. Pathetically, at that.

“Okay- okay, yeah,” Dream replies, wiping his sweaty palms against his sweats in a way that’s definitely not attractive, but can’t be helped. “Yeah, sure, what- uh- what did you wanna talk about?”

It usually isn’t a reach for Dream to assume he’s overreacting. Sometimes he reads too much into situations that are meant to be taken at surface level. However, that is definitely not the case this time and Dream can tell. The way George stares at him is frightening; thoughts that have been left unsaid for far too long are swimming in those piercing brown eyes, trying to find an exit.

George only breaks the gaze to walk quietly to the door and for a second, Dream thinks he’s changed his mind, but before he can slouch in relief, George closes the door and turns the lock. The click is loud in the otherwise silent room and it makes Dream’s skin crawl.

“I’m gonna talk,” George mumbles, lingering by the door with his hand still resting idly on the knob. His gaze is downcast, eyes narrowed as he captures his bottom lip between his rows of teeth, worrying it ever so slightly. “Just listen, okay?”

Dream rushes to reply, “Yeah! I can- I can do that.” He mentally cringes at the sound of his own voice; it sounds so desperate. Fitting, considering how badly he wants to bolt out of the room, jump in his car, and race back to Florida. “Do you wanna sit? Maybe? Or we can stand too, I don’t really mind. It’s up to you-”

“Clay.”

Dream darts in a breath. His rambling comes to an abrupt halt and he waits quietly for George to continue. George doesn’t sound annoyed, angry, or anything of the sorts. In fact, he sounds calm and that’s even scarier because Dream knows that George is *far* from calm. He can see the way George’s fingers tremble when they leave the knob and curl into tiny fists at his side.

When George turns to face him, he doesn’t dare take a step to minimize their distance again, and Dream remains frozen in place where he stands.

There’s only a few feet between them, but it feels they’re an ocean apart again.

Each second that passes is only a reminder of the inevitable conversation that’s to come. Dream doesn’t know if he loves the silence or hates it. On one hand, they could stay broken like this until

Sapnap calls them for dinner and the topic gets brushed underneath the rug. On the other hand, he needs George to alleviate the stress that's slowly overwhelming him and just *spit it out already*.

"I have a lot of things to say," George finally whispers. There he stands, with a confused grimace on his face and one hand rubbing his upper arm awkwardly. "Things I need you to let me say."

Dream's eyebrows thread together. He doesn't know what George means by that because when has Dream ever stopped him from saying anything? He loves knowing the inner workings of George's mind. It's George that's always the one hesitating to let Dream in even though they've been friends for years. While it's true that Dream hadn't shown George his face for the longest time, George is the one between them that has more secrets; George is the one that hides the most.

"When I say that, I just mean you can't interrupt me," George chuckles nervously, timidly lifting his gaze to meet Dream's. Even with the distance between them, Dream can see the way George's smile falters. "Because it's gonna be messy and confusing and just- a lot to take in." He pauses briefly, as if he's waiting for some sort of confirmation from Dream, and Dream nods once, albeit out of a need for clarification. "You don't even have to say anything at all afterwards, but just hear me out, okay?"

"George," Dream frowns and adjusts his posture so that he's standing a little straighter. The last thing he wants is for George to think that he's treating whatever this is nonchalantly and not being attentive. "Of course I'll hear you out. Is something wrong?"

Given that he sort of knows where this is going, Dream probably shouldn't have added that last question. He should've gone for something more light-hearted to ease the tension, to let George know that *hey, everything is going to be okay*. Now, of course he doesn't *know* if everything is going to be okay and something in his gut stirs, telling him that that's most likely not going to be the case, but he knows better than to stand there like an idiot.

"Sorry," he cringes, squeezing his eyes shut for a quick second and then sighing. "I mean," his tongue rolls past his lips, which are far from chapped and yet feel oddly dry. "What's up?"

The silence stretches out between them again and Dream gulps, fearing he's messed this up already. He seems to always make mistakes when he's around George. He gets tongue-tied, his thoughts become incoherent, and he does everything that's needed in the recipe for a beautiful disaster. That's not George's fault. That's Dream's fault and Dream's alone because George never asked for any of this. George didn't purposely try to make Dream into the walking catastrophe that he is. Dream had signed himself up for that by fostering feelings in a relationship that should've remained strictly platonic.

"I like what you said initially," George replies with a shrug and half a smile. "*Is something wrong?*" He mimics, shifting his weight from one leg to the other. Dream doesn't find the humor in it and George swallows thickly, "Because something is very wrong."

The way George introduces the topic betrays the severity of the situation, but knowing him, Dream guesses that George is calming his nerves down. In other words, whatever is on his mind is enough to make him fumble and hesitate, when he normally has a quick tongue. Therefore, Dream can safely assume that once they're done here, he's going to leave with the burden that George discards.

His worry must show because George loses his composure quickly and panics, "Not with you or with us or anything!" He shakes his hands expressively and then freezes, fingers curling into his palms. "Well, sort of," he continues truthfully and Dream's facial expression must twist in an alarming way because George is in a hurry to add on, "Something's- something's wrong with *me*."

Dream braces himself, gritting his teeth and tensing every muscle in his body. He's been in this situation before, it's nothing new. The whole '*it's not you, it's me*' talk. He hates these types of conversations the most because it makes him feel like he's being babied, like the person talking to him thinks they need to water things down because Dream is weak and because he can't handle it. He might be emotional and he might be impulsive, but he's not gonna let feelings or a relationship weigh him down. He's not going to let someone else have that power over him.

George lowers his hands, a conflicted look appearing on his countenance as he dwindle between reaching out and closing himself off.

Oh, Dream realizes, his shoulders drooping. He leans back until he's sitting on the desk behind him somewhat, staring at George with a lost look in his eyes.

Well, of course there's a first for everything.

"Dream- Clay, I can't do this anymore," George spits out as if the words burn him to say. A chill runs down Dream's spine as George's eyebrows draw together and lower. "This," he gestures between them sporadically, the frustration in him slowly taking over. "This has to stop."

Accept and move on. Accept and move on.

Dream moves his hands subtly and grips onto the edge of the desk to ground himself, fingernails

digging into the wood. He knows that this shouldn't affect him because it was bound to happen and regardless of his feelings, he wouldn't have been able to prevent it. He should've begun preparing for this as soon as he agreed to teach George how to kiss. Actually, he should've never agreed in the first place because agreeing—agreeing is what got them here.

It might not have been the cause for Dream's feelings, but *boy* if it wasn't a catalyst. Had Dream never kissed George, had he never pushed past kissing George, had he stuck to his imagination, he might have been able to convince himself to move on by now and if not, at the very least, he wouldn't be left with memories that'll only haunt him. He can't do this. He can't just drop this and forget. Not when he knows how George sounds, how he feels, how he *tastes*.

"You can't do this anymore?" Dream repeats, although he heard George clearly the first time. "Are you gonna tell me why? Or are you gonna leave me in the dark like you always do?"

George snaps his head up, catching the venom laced in the words that dart out of Dream's mouth. "What do you mean? I learned what I needed to and now I want to stop," he elaborates, but Dream can tell that his answer is half-assed. "I've realized that it's pointless and I don't- I don't really like it."

That's the opening that Dream was looking for. The clear indication that George is lying and that he's doing exactly what Dream expected him to do. "So we're going with the second option, great," he says sarcastically and scoffs. "If that's all, can we get back to coding?"

"What do you mean '*the second option*'? I'm not hiding anything," George huffs indignantly, folding his arms over his chest.

Dream raises his eyebrows and shakes his head, conveying a message along the lines of '*alright, whatever you say*', and then turns around with the intent to return to the other, less severe problem at hand. Before he can get to it, he hears hurried footsteps approach him and then a slender pair of hands yanks the keyboard away from him, pressing a set of buttons that closes all the windows on the screen.

"Dude, what the hell?" He asks, shifting to face the brunet again. His next comment of distaste for George's actions dies on his tongue.

George looks up at him, gaze unwavering, but there are unshed tears coating his eyes with a quivering gloss. "Why are you being like this?"

His lower lip trembles and Dream's eyes immediately focus on the way he sinks his teeth down for a bit of stability. After a while, Dream looks away again. "Like what? I'm not doing anything."

"You're being *weird*."

Dream rolls his eyes, "Oh, come on." He pushes himself away from the desk, standing up to his full height as if it'll give him some leverage in this discussion that they're having. "If anything *you're* being weird."

He makes a move to leave the setting, but George grabs onto his wrist and he recoils without thinking. Hurt flickers across George's face and Dream feels a nauseating level of regret nestle itself in a pool of mixed emotions. It swims and it swims until its weight becomes too heavy and it sinks to the bottom, pushing aside anchors of sorrow and anger. He wants to apologize, but it seems that the guilt has pushed his bitterness out and onto his tongue.

"Why are you doing this?" George asks meekly, hands falling to his sides where they shake like Dream's beating heart.

"Doing what?" Dream mutters, trying so hard to subdue the growing anger inside of him. It's himself that the anger should be directed towards, but everything is becoming too much to bear and making him malfunction; so, suddenly, the target is on George's head instead of his own. "All I did was ask for honesty, but you can't give me that. You never give me that."

Something akin to fury washes over George's visage, the hurt from before returning with an amplification that makes Dream's breath hitch. George's lips press into a thin line, preventing him from saying anything he might regret, and that only spurs Dream on instead of making him back down. Even now, while he's tearing into George with no remorse over something that isn't his fault, George refuses to let his emotions get the better of him. He stands there, staring at Dream, not saying a word even though Dream knows he wants to and Dream is tired of it.

Shut up now. Shut up before you make things worse.

Dream knows that he should step away, clear his head, and come back with an apology ready. He's not listening like George had asked him to. He's not letting George speak without interrupting, he's not keeping his opinions to himself, he's being hot headed and problematic.

"You're scared aren't you?"

A loud bang resounds in the room when George slams his fist on the desk, effectively bringing Dream's ridiculous rambling to a halt.

"*Yes!*" George shouts, his final cord of restraint snapping in two. He's not looking at Dream anymore, but even so, Dream can see the vexation poisoning his brown eyes. "Yes, I'm fucking scared, you fucking idiot!"

Nothing changes. Time doesn't stop, a gust of wind doesn't hit Dream like a slap across the face, everything remains the same; yet, he sees the house of cards topple over. On each card is a different memory: hidden kisses on different days, whispered nothings on different nights, lingering touches on different surfaces. Dream sees their first hug in the crowded airport and their first kiss in their shared bedroom. He sees George hesitantly sink to his knees, he sees himself reach out, dipping his thumb past parted lips. He sees everything and it feels like it might be the last time he does.

"I'm sick of feeling like this! I'm in a new country surrounded by people I've only ever talked to online and I'm nervous. Of course I'm fucking nervous, I *knew* I would be nervous. You know how I am- I never leave my own house so flying to America is a big deal for me and *no shit* I'm fucking scared. The only reason I even got on that stupid flight is for *you!*"

It seems like an exaggeration since George is fairly close to the other people here, but it's not. As much as Dream wants to pretend that George is here for reasons other than simply him, he knows that George is telling the truth. Sincerity bleeds from the tone of George's voice. Dream is the only one George ever wakes up for, Dream is the only one whose call rings through George's 'do not disturb', Dream is the only one that knows about George's fear of flying and the only one that can calm him down. George did this for him.

"You're the reason I'm here, Clay, and yet everytime we're together, I feel like I have to walk on eggshells. Like if I say the wrong thing or make the wrong move, I'm gonna ruin our friendship. I'm not hiding things from you on purpose, I just don't want you to hate me! And yet the more careful I get, the more mistakes I make."

Dream takes a step forward, but stops there when George flinches, clearly not open to any sort of comfort other than verbal. "George, I—" Dream's throat goes dry and he feels himself deflate. "I could never hate you."

"Don't *say* things like that, Clay," George sighs in exasperation, shaking his head lightly. "Don't make promises you can't keep. You don't know what I could possibly say or do in the future. You don't know the kind of thoughts that- that run through my head."

If only you knew the thoughts that ran through mine.

“Tell me then,” Dream urges, eyebrows pinching together. George makes a face in denial, but Dream presses on, “Tell me and I’ll reassure you that I could never hate you.” Heavy reluctance settles on George’s face and Dream’s voice breaks as he makes a final attempt, “George, please.”

“Everytime I look at you,” George abruptly starts, “all I can think about is kissing you. Your lips pressed against mine, your hands, your body; it’s nonstop, constantly running laps in my brain. And everytime you’re not around, everytime I’m with someone else, my mind just races back to you. I sit there thinking about the next time we’ll be alone together, the next time you’ll lean down and kiss me again, the next time we’ll explore something new. That’s not- that’s not *normal*, Clay. Not for friends.”

“And the worst thing,” George says with a pathetic laugh, rolling his tongue over his lips and then biting on them sourly. “The worst thing is that it didn’t even start with the stupid lessons. I spent *years* wanting to meet you and I thought that it was curiosity- that I just wanted to know what my best friend looks like.” Dream’s gaze is unmoving as it traces the movement of George’s hands which sift through his brown curls in frustration. “But it wasn’t just that. I wanted to be around you in every way. Synced up my sleep schedule with you, kept you on call with me for over ten hours a day, practically lived in that hoodie of yours because all of it helped me pretend. It helped me feel like I was here with you.”

“Then, I get here. I’ve waited so long to get here and I *finally* do- and that’s,” George tosses his head back, slowly dropping his gaze until it’s aimed straight ahead, flying right past Dream. “That’s when the realization came to me. Because the first thought that hit me when I saw you, Clay-”

Dream darts in a breath and the tears in George’s eyes finally spill over.

“-is that I really, *really* wanted to kiss you.”

There’s a pregnant pause and Dream hears George curse softly under his breath.

“And I’d never even kissed anyone before.”

The brunet locks get pushed back as George presses the heels of his palms to his forehead. Stress

and fear produce more and more tears that slowly cascade down George's face, trace his jawline, and then drip from his chin to the floor. There's a thick knot resting at the back of Dream's throat that's hard to swallow and so all he can do is stare, unsaid words remaining unsaid.

This is what Dream has been waiting for. This is George presenting himself, raw and vulnerable, with uncapped emotions and unfiltered thoughts. But it's more than just that. It's nothing like dipping a hand into shallow water. George is submerging the two of them in the same ocean that Dream has spent weeks trying to stay afloat in whilst waves crash over him, threatening to drag him under.

This is George's confession.

"I told you to scare me," George whispers, sliding his hands down to cover his eyes. "And that was a mistake- a big mistake. Just like asking you to teach me how to kiss."

This whole fiasco that they've gotten themselves into is just that: a big mistake. A tragic mistake which Dream would be lying about if he said he didn't regret it at times. That might sound shameful because how could you possibly regret spending time with the person you're enamored with? However, when you're left clouded with doubts over whether or not you've made the right choice, regret comes a lot easier than courage. So, Dream has definitely wondered about the different outcomes and all the parallel universes they come from. How would things have ended up if he had said no to George's questions? Would they still have been where they are now? Would things be better? Worse?

But if it's the only path that would lead them here—to George confessing to Dream all the words that Dream has spent so long trying to say himself—then he wouldn't change a thing.

"And then when you opened up about your first kiss, I told you to forget their name and replace it with mine," George recalls and Dream nods once, even if George can't see him. He remembers the way those words had engraved themselves into his heart. "But I can't forget yours and replace it with someone else's. Because I don't *want* to. Now that I've felt what it's like to have you and to be yours, I can't.. I can't imagine being with anyone else."

Me neither, Dream aches to say, his fingers twitching as they fight off the need to reach out and yank George towards him. He's right there, closer than ever before, and Dream can't do it. He can't push forward and take that leap of faith. George is saying everything Dream has ever wanted to hear and yet *why* can't Dream unchain himself from the anchors that keep him at bay.

"So when you ask me if I'm scared," George mumbles, dropping his hands in defeat. "The answer

is- I'm *terrified*."

Dream takes another tentative step forward and this time, George is too busy babbling to notice, so Dream continues to inch closer slowly.

"This isn't normal, I know. We're just friends and I," George sighs sadly, fiddling with the hem of his shirt. "I'm making things weird, I'm fucking things up, but I just had to say it. At least once."

Dream finally reaches him, large hands fitting into the dips of George's waist, pressing his shirt flat against his skin and accentuating his beautiful curves. George jumps in surprise, alarmed eyes looking all ways before landing on Dream's shining jades. They stay still, an arm's length away from one another, staring with timid intent. Dream brushes his thumbs over the smooth fabric, dipping into his soft plush stomach like definitive stamps, and then takes a deep breath. It's his turn to speak. George has said his piece and now he's waiting for Dream to say his despite his claims from earlier.

"You're scared about ruining our friendship, right?" Dream leans down to whisper those words into George's ear. With his fluctuating level of confidence, it's best to keep his face hidden. He drags George in close with the leverage that he has. There's a hiccup in the smaller man's breathing and it gives Dream the extra bullet of strength he needs to move down until his lips are leveled with George's.

"Then let me do it instead."

Dream leans the last few centimeters in, lips lazily slotting over George's. The kiss is gentle and slow, getting firmer as time passes and they both realize that this is real, that they're both feeling this steady tug, that neither of them are fading into an imaginative fog anytime soon. Dream doesn't know if it's just because of his abundant joy, but this kiss feels different compared to the rest. It feels better, like the fireworks are coming back in ten folds.

"They make you feel as if you're flying and drowning at the same time. Like you're on a wave, savoring the freedom you feel as you're riding it, while knowing at some point you're going to crash."

And maybe they will crash, but Dream doesn't care. Not right now.

He presses in deeper, urged by a manifestation of his own desire that presses up behind him,

pushing him forward. It whispers for him to take, take what's *his*, and so he does. He kisses George like he's imprinting his name on the parted plush lips that greet him. It feels frighteningly good to finally be able to do that freely. At the same time, the air is leaving his lungs rapidly and his entire body is telling him to pull away. He can hear George gasp into the kiss, fighting to squeeze a breath in between their rhythmic movements, but instead of doing the same, he just chases the pleasure mindlessly. The lack of oxygen becomes another ignored warning.

George is the first to pull away, questions resting heavily on his tongue, and the more he tries to ask them, the more Dream tries to kiss them away. Eventually, Dream spares him and trails the kisses to George's rosy cheeks, working up the salty trails of his tears. Long kisses spaced out between chaste ones, decorating George's face with imaginary lipstick stains. Dream muffles each syllable of his hidden confession into George's skin, some kisses merging into the next to depict his sloppy train of thought.

"Clay," George whispers and Dream silences a hum of acknowledgement with a kiss against the brunet's forehead. This elicits giggles out of George that last as long as Dream's flurry of pecks. "Clay, *wait*."

Dream emits a whiny sigh, dragging his lips down the perfect slope of George's nose before leaving one final, lingering kiss on the strawberry pink lips he could spend an eternity admiring. He leans back, just enough for them to be able to press their foreheads together comfortably, and stares into those twinkling umber irises he admires so much. There are tears still fresh on George's lashes and that makes the sight all the more memorable for Dream because as sadistic as it sounds, George is the prettiest when he cries.

"What- what does this mean?" George asks warily, moving one hand up to lay flat against Dream's chest, so that he's ready to push away if anything treads southwards.

They stare at each other quietly while Dream sorts out his thoughts. George's fingers slowly curl inward, forming a loose hold on Dream's shirt, and Dream clamps down harder on his waist. He watches as a straight row of ivory teeth peek past a pair of cherry bitten lips and gets distracted by the thought of running his tongue over them. A nervous smile tugs onto the pretty mouth and Dream feels his heart beat with so much ferocity, it feels like it's going to carve a way out of his chest.

His eyes flick up, following the alluring arch of George's eyebrows and exploring the lovely scar; sprint over the fans of eyelashes, dive into the pools of chocolate and then dance with the specks of stardust; jump from freckle to freckle, connecting messy constellations, all the while memorizing the shade of pink on the apples of his cheeks; and slide down the curve of his nose to rest on the dip of his philtrum. When he returns to the tempting smile, he notices that George is saying something, but the words don't reach his ears.

Amid worshipping the angelic features that make up the beauty that enchants him, Dream comes to a realization.

“I love you.”

He hears the snap of Eros’ bow and the clatter of metal when the arrow falls to the ground instead of piercing through his chest. The target on his back disappears and Dream realizes that he’s never been harmed; nothing—no one—has compelled him to love George except George himself. Through pure existence, George has entangled Dream in his web of charms.

Dream doesn’t need a God to help him love George and no God would ever be able to make him *unlove* George.

Aphrodite can try, driven by spite knowing that Dream thinks George reigns over beauty, but Dream would go so far as to gamble his soul with Hades to try and protect what they have.

“I love you,” he whispers breathlessly, the words feeling foreign on his own tongue and surprising Dream as much as they surprise George. An airy laugh escapes him and suddenly he feels incredibly delirious, repeating the words like a mantra. “I love you, George, I love you.”

He emphasizes each declaration of love with a kiss or two, cupping George’s jaw with his hands so that he can hold him in place. George barely has wiggle room and the edge of Sapnap’s desk is uncomfortably digging into the back of his thighs, but Dream shows no sign of moving anytime soon. Dream keeps leaning closer and closer until George is at an awkward angle, both hands scrambling down to hold onto the desk behind him so that he doesn’t slip and fall.

The continued onslaught of kisses and confessions causes George to squirm and giggle. “I heard you the first time, idiot.”

Dream shakes his head, “You don’t understand.”

With a quick glance downwards and a risky calculation, he drops one hand down to the dip of George’s back and swiftly turns them around. One careful step forward for him equals one backward for George. After a few more trials, they become hasty with their movements until George’s knees buckle at the edge of a bed and he falls onto the mattress below, frantic hands dragging Dream down with him. Dream pushes a sweater off the bed for George’s comfort; it

looks like the one Sapnap was wearing last night, so Dream makes a mental note to apologize to him later.

“I *love* you, George,” he repeats with a smile so big it hurts to keep on. He waits patiently, but he knows better than to expect such a bold statement to leave George’s mouth. Besides, the innocent blush on George’s cheeks and the shy curl of his lips give away his thoughts. So, Dream promises to say it enough for the both of them. “I love you, I really do.”

George gives up trying to convince him to quiet down. Or at least that’s what Dream thinks when the brunet sighs and relaxes his posture, looking up at Dream with a fond twinkle in his eyes. So he parts his lips, aiming to say those three words again because he’s wasted so many weeks not saying them, but is pleasantly surprised when George roughly grabs his face.

“They like when you grab their face.”

He raises an eyebrow curiously and expects George’s courage to waver and fall, fingers losing their firm grip and turning skittish as they drop from Dream’s face to his shirt like they always do. George only raises one back, his smile turning into a teasing smirk if anything.

“Lean in.”

George does the opposite. He brings Dream down. Dream allows himself to be guided slowly, only stopping when their noses touch. There’s a shout from the other side of the bedroom door that sounds a lot like Sapnap calling them for dinner. It’s far, far into the distance, and probably from downstairs, but Dream looks up out of instinct.

“Get them to face you.”

Dream feels George’s thumb right underneath his lower lip, pressing onto his chin until his head angles itself down so that they’re face to face again. The innocence from before is completely gone and Dream finds himself growing flustered by the dark look in George’s eyes as he stares up at him coyly. It doesn’t take long for George to grow bored of their pointless staring and diminish the little distance between them.

This is new. This is different.

George is more fierce when he takes the initiative. He's more about pushing the limits with experiments that leave nothing unexplored. His hands move from Dream's face to the back of his neck, one of them reaching up to entangle slender digits in dirty blond locks. When George pulls away briefly and laughs at Dream chasing after him in deprivation, all cocky and vain, Dream decides that he *likes* 'different'.

"You are such a good kisser," George whispers and if Dream took a second to actually think about it, he might've chuckled at the fact that George had nobody to compare Dream to. However with George trailing open-mouthed kisses down his jawline and then leaving sloppy ones over his lips that are slick with spit, Dream can't form any coherent thoughts.

He gasps softly when the fingers in his hair tighten and tug, forcing him at an angle where George can freely paint the column of his neck with marks in hues he'll never be able to recreate. He feels stripped bare when George introduces his teeth to the sensitive skin, feels the sun lick down his back when George presses his tongue flat over the orchids that are blooming, and feels submerged in icy waters when George teasingly blows a puff of air over the wet patch.

"Pretty," George whispers and then his fingers loosen their hold in Dream's hair, allowing the latter to dip his head down again. A needy plea evades Dream guised as a soft groan and George chuckles, seeing right through Dream's facade.

"Take note of the things they like."

"You like that?" George asks, his fingers flirting with the collar of Dream's shirt. "You like when I call you pretty?"

Dream's never been one to have his mind scrambled during situations like this. He's usually the one in charge, the one with coherency, the one that leaves people broken and dependent on him. So, clearly, he's been missing out. Because he really, *really* likes it when George tilts his head, his expression shifting from curious to unamused, and says, "I asked you a question."

Instead of giving George a verbal response, Dream nods pathetically, asking for pity more than anything. It'll bruise his ego to say what George wants him to say. He's not above that, but he's not going down without a fight either. The thrill of George knocking him down into submission is also too tempting of an opportunity to pass up. George is hardly ever mad, but Dream has been blessed enough to see it happen a few times. He's seen George clench his jaw, press his tongue against his cheek, and exhale slowly through his nose. He's heard the scoffs of frustration, the drop in his voice when he tries to calm himself down, and the filthy curses that leave him when he shouts.

For lack of better words, it's *hot*.

Dream gets hurled back into reality when he feels an added weight on his hip and while he tries to process the fact that George's thigh is pressed against him, George flips them over swiftly. Dream lands with his back on the mattress, head hitting the gentle surface with a thud. His mind blanks out when George sits up straight, looking down at him from an angle of unquestionable superiority, and *god* is it really unfair that George doesn't have a single bad side.

With a soft hum, George repositions his hand carefully over the side of Dream's neck, cupping it with his longer fingers while the thumb skirts across the front and hooks into the other side. Dream's mouth goes dry the second George applies the tiniest bit of pressure and he's certain that the hitch in his breath doesn't go unnoticed by George. Those suspicions are confirmed when George smirks like the embodiment of sin itself and rolls his hips down not once, but twice. Dream can feel himself falling victim to lust rapidly as the venomous heat plummets to the pit of his stomach.

"It was quite simple really," George mutters, rubbing his fingers along the side of Dream's neck in a half-assed attempt to prevent bruising. "So you're either ignoring me or.."

George decides he doesn't give a damn if it counteracts his previous actions. His eyes harden and he *squeezes*.

"You're too *dumb* to understand."

Dream gasps. The words and the lack of oxygen going straight to his dick. His hips twitch, grinding up into the cleft of George's backside with an insistent need. George doesn't grant any merciful friction, even threatening to lift off for a bit to test if Dream will helplessly chase after him. He does and it leaves George laughing in awe.

"Praise *and* degradation?" George raises an eyebrow, having yet to let up on his grip around Dream's neck. Dream can hear his occasional pauses of hesitation and that's really the only thing that gives away the fact that George is new to all of this.

"Who knew my pretty puppy could be such a needy slut?"

Dream doesn't know what he rides off more, being called "puppy" or "slut", being called "pretty" or "needy", or maybe just being called George's. *My*, George had said. *My pretty puppy*. It made

him feel owned and to be George's is all Dream has wanted for so long.

Then he said *a needy slut*. A instead of *My*. Like Dream was being reduced to another toy for George to use. Normally, he would growl a refusal. He would argue that George was *only* his as much as he was *only* George's. But in this scenario, where they're in bed and George is looking at him like all he's good for is pleasing him—pleasing George—Dream has no complaints. It's insanely attractive.

George does that unforgivable thing with his hips again: rolling down once and then lifting off. Dream's hands fly up to grab onto George's thighs, frantic to keep him anchored down so that the friction isn't fleeting, and he's met with stinging sensations.

"Hands off."

The line that Dream is balancing on is very thin and the next time George pushes him, he might just fall off of it. For now though, he listens and keeps his hands at his sides, letting them curl into the sheets uselessly.

George doesn't reward him. Instead he makes Dream's life more miserable if anything. He leans back—the angle he's in dunks Dream's mind straight into the gutter—and then slides his hands down Dream's torso slowly before hiking up his own thighs and resting at the hem of his shirt. Dream stares hungrily as the shirt lifts just enough to reveal the milky white complexion underneath and then groans when it falls back down. This repeats a few more times and Dream feels his frustration grow dangerously like a ticking time bomb. Just as he's about to yank the shirt off himself, George swiftly pulls it over his head and discards it behind him.

There's a mesmerizing pattern of beautiful purple buds slowly blossoming on George's skin. From seeds that *Dream* planted. Because George is Dream's masterpiece.

Another shout bounces off their door, rattling the entire room with impatience. George laughs breathily, slim fingers playing carelessly with the strings of his sweats. "I think we'd better hurry."

If Dream blinked, he would've missed George yanking his own pants and briefs down to the middle of his lean thighs. He's met with the sight of George's pink cock, hardening against his stomach and staining it with small splotches of precum.

It's pretty, just like the rest of him.

Dream rushes to pull his own pieces of clothing down, just enough to let his own dick pop free, thick and stiff with the need to bury itself in something. That something ends up being George's loose fist. George sighs with poorly hidden desire as he slowly strokes Dream's cock into full hardness, marveling at the sight. Dream can see the corners of his lips twitch, like he's fighting the urge to use his mouth instead of his hand, and Dream wants to tell him that he would be *super* okay with it, but George has other plans.

Dream hisses when he feels George's dick rut against his and he has to muffle a sound at how obscene their slick excitement sounds. George's fist stretches around both of them and Dream bites back a smile at how much George struggles to make it feel pleasurable. Eventually, George settles on using two hands instead of one, though Dream had expected that to happen, given that George can barely fit Dream's dick alone in one.

It's cute. Dream doesn't know if *cute* is the word he should be using when George is grinding his dick against him, but touché.

George's hands move so slow, it's insufferable. The bratty smile on his face tells Dream that he's teasing him on purpose and Dream grits his teeth as his annoyance builds. However, for the sake of pleasing the snarky brunet, Dream plays along. He whines just the way he knows George wants him to, high-pitched and needy. His hips stutter with urgency, but instead of being granted satisfaction, George's soft palms pull away.

"No! Fuck, George, *please*," his exasperation bleeds through each of his words. "We don't have time, just- just get on with it, baby, please."

George hums, quiet and low, refusing to give Dream the pleasure he craves. His lashes flutter tauntingly, daring Dream to do something about it if he's upset. Dream *would*, but the look in George's eyes has him second guessing if it's the best decision. It seems like George still wants to have fun.

(Dream is starting to think he might be more of a service top than he'd originally considered.)

George brings his hands back, keeping them wrapped around their cocks snugly, but doesn't resume stroking. Instead, he slides himself back, angles his hips downwards, and aims shallow thrusts. His forehead creases when he frowns in concentration, working his hips carefully to make the experience pleasurable for both of them.

A muffled sentence of curses strung together gets tugged out of Dream's mouth as he grinds his hips up to provide that extra bit of friction for them. Their paces differ enough to settle a rhythm where Dream counts George's fast thrusts with his slower ones. Although it's noticeable that George wants to tease around some more, the ecstasy influences him to just *get on with it*.

The vexed shouts of their temporary housemates don't help much either.

"Let me touch you," Dream whispers, raising his hands and tentatively placing them on George's knees. His fingers dare to breach inner thigh territory, but just barely. "Please, baby. I can make you feel *so* good. So, so, *so* good, princess."

It's a promise that he knows he can fulfill so he has no problem repeating it over and over again, turning himself into a broken record. George is watching him with lidded eyes, hips coming to a slow stop when lethargy catches up to him. Dream massages the plush skin with his fingers, hoping to be more convincing, and George purses his lips in both contemplation and distrust.

Finally, after Dream spreads his legs and thrusts his hips up once, does George break. "Fine, go ahead."

George barely has time to finish the sentence before Dream's hands land on the smaller man's lithe waist. With this new leverage, Dream pushes himself off the mattress and flips them over with ease. He leans back, admiring the look of embarrassment and shock that paints itself over George's face, and then hastily hooks his hands underneath the back of George's milky thighs.

"Up," Dream commands quietly and George awkwardly raises his legs.

Dream slides his hands down those slim legs, sighing shakily at the arousal that tries to persuade him to be rougher, to mark everything in sight. He eventually reaches soft ankles which he crosses, one over the other, and keeps in place with one of his hands.

His other hand pulls impatiently at George's sweats and boxers until they're a little further down his legs. Then he jerks George's legs to the side with his hold so that he can see the beautiful blush spread on George's face as realization sits in.

The manhandling is aggressive enough to leave unintentional bruises, but Dream knows that it's exactly what George wants. He knows that George has been testing him this entire time, pushing him to that brink until he trips and falls off.

“Keep your thighs pressed together for me, okay?” He says quietly and George manages one, weak nod.

Carefully, Dream guides his dick into the crevice between George’s lovely thighs. The friction is uncomfortable at first, but after a few calculated thrusts, George’s thighs turn messy from leaking precum. Dream groans softly, the image burned in his mind forever, and quickens the pace of his thrusts.

“Ah! More, g’me more please,” George begs, his dirty hands gripping onto the pillows behind him. “Fuck, you’re so good, you’re *so* good, Clay.”

(Dream really doesn’t wanna think about Sapnap during sex, but there’s no way the younger man isn’t going to kill them after all of this.)

Dream lets go of George’s ankles, no longer having to force George’s thighs shut because George does so himself, and opts to shove two long fingers into George’s mouth. The lewd noises are becoming loud enough to put them in jeopardy and George looks much, much better this way.

George doesn’t waste any time running his tongue over and under Dream’s fingers, pretty pink lips moving up and down at a perfected pace. Sage colored eyes travel down until they reach a similar shade of rosy pink elsewhere, more specifically, George’s aching hard dick. It slides uselessly against George’s stomach, spurting small beads of white every now and then. Dream turns merciful and curls his fingers around the weeping cock.

As if God’s testing them for defying his will, just as Dream is about to stroke George into completion, the knob to the room rattles noisily. Dream’s actions come to a halt and George pulls off his fingers slowly, glancing at the door in confusion.

“Hey, did you guys not hear me?”

Sapnap. Sapnap’s on the other side of the door. While Dream and George are *fucking* on his *bed*.

The panic is short-lived. Dream’s lips, that were parted in worry, turn into a mischievous smirk. He glances down at George, who is still tense with stress and focused on the new problem at hand, and then slowly gyrates his hips. George’s eyes snap to him in shock and Dream shrugs nonchalantly.

“He asked us a question,” Dream says, pumping George’s neglected cock once and eliciting a whimper from him. “Why don’t you go ahead and answer him, doll?”

To emphasize that he isn’t joking, Dream strokes George a few times, quick enough to have George’s lips fall open in awe, and then comes to an abrupt halt. When George refocuses on him with a confused pout, Dream raises an eyebrow and cocks his head in the direction of the door.

“I- um,” George starts intelligibly and then sighs softly in defeat. “Sorry, wh-what’s wrong, Sapnap?”

Dream rewards George with a few harsh thrusts, angling his hips so that George can feel the drag of Dream’s cock against his perineum. It evokes a shudder from both of them.

“I called you guys for dinner,” Sapnap says cluelessly, playing with the knob a few times again. “Are you gonna come?”

Dream laughs at the irony of the question and places his free hand on George’s hip, pushing him down onto the bed so that he can ground himself better and quicken the pace of his thrusts. George’s eyes roll to the back of his head from the new waves of stimulation.

“Y-yes!” George squeaks, chest heaving up and down. Dream swipes his thumb over the head of George’s cock and George keens, thrashing against the sheets. “Fuck- I, *god*.”

“George? Are you okay?”

George looks up at Dream, pleading for him to stop so that he can coherently answer Sapnap’s questions, but Dream doesn’t relent. He shakes his head silently and then fastens his strokes, matching the punctuated rhythm of his hips. George gasps softly, eyes squeezing shut and back arching off the bed.

“He asked you a question,” Dream mutters, twisting his wrist to get a pained cry from George which the brunet muffles into his own hand. “Answer him.”

His hold tightens unforgivingly, urging George to say something lest they get caught like this. The

thought is exhilarating, but Dream doesn't wanna deal with the aftermath. Because while he enjoys the hypothetical scenario, he'd rather not deal with his friends' childish remarks. Even if each jabbing comment made at George would make Dream's pride swell.

"I'm okay!" George gasps out, breaths short as he struggles to fit air into his lungs. "W-we'll be down in a bit, just uh," he pauses, weakly prying Dream's fingers off his dick when he's afraid that he'll let out an inexcusable noise. "Just finishing up!"

It'll be a problem when they join their friends for dinner and Sapnap returns to his room at night, staring at the yet to be fixed plug-in. For now though, they wait for Sapnap's response, George trembling underneath Dream while the dirty blonde slows down his thrusts to focus on the strength of them instead.

A few seconds of silence pass and then Dream hears a hum of acknowledgement from the other side of the door. He listens closely to the sound of fading footsteps and then lets out a breath of relief. George notices this and tries to squeeze his thighs together even more, creating a delicious heat for Dream to thrust into.

Dream pulls his hand out of George's grasp, lifts it up, and then brings it down onto George's cheek with a terrifying amount of force. "That's for touching me without permission earlier."

It's a mocking reminder of George's brief display of dominance. A statement as much as a challenge. Dream's not opposed to George taking the leading role in bed, after all it's not much of a jump for them considering that George has all the power in their questionable relationship (with Dream leaping hurdles to please him and what not). However he knows how much George likes this as well. He knows that as much as George had his fun being on top, he *loves* to be reduced to nothing.

He loves being a pliant little whore for Dream to use.

Dream's hand finally returns to George's cock and he strokes it at the same inhumane speed that his hips move at. The groans and grunts that fall from his lips sound borderline animalistic and each of them prompt an almost pornographic cry out of George. Dream finds it difficult to focus on anything except the soft *ah, ah, ah*'s that leave out the beautiful boy positioned below him and he knows that George is getting louder and louder, but he can't bring himself to care.

He begins to drill in between George's thighs with reckless abandon and his wrist threatens to cramp up if he keeps at this tempo. The familiar knot in his abdomen tightens and all Dream can form are crude moans slurred with praises. Thankfully, George is right there with him, making the

most filthy facial expressions while everything that pushes past his lips sounds blasphemous. From the vulgar whimpers to the salacious pleas, George is filled with enough sin to make God tremble.

“Gonna cum, baby?” Dream asks and the fact that he has to speak louder to be heard over the indecent sound of skin slapping against skin makes him grin with arrogance. George nods once whilst he stares up at the ceiling, eyes blown wide and too shaky to focus on anything for too long. “Go ahead,” Dream coos, encouraging George with masterful strokes.

“Show me how much you love my cock.”

The sight of George losing himself to ecstasy is beautiful. He arches himself off the sheets, both hands coming up to tug roughly at his own brunet locks, while the lower half of his body twitches in pleasure. There are tears spilling from the corners of his eyes and his teeth have bitten his lips into the rawest shade of red. Parts of his pale complexion are highlighted in pink and Dream wants to taste the gradient.

George is scrambling to steady his breathing, but Dream is the one that feels out of breath.

A thrilled giggle escapes George as he slowly comes down from his high and Dream entices an overstimulated whine or two out of him by thumbing the underside of his limp cock. George repays the favor by twisting and turning so that he can move his legs back and forth, helping Dream reach his own orgasm.

Dream tosses his head back when he cums, shuddering breaths quietly escaping him. His release mostly mixes with George’s on the latter’s stomach, but some of it also sticks to George’s quivering thighs. George uses his hands to push his legs together even more, practically milking Dream’s dick of all the cum it can produce, before they both succumb to fatigue and slacken their postures.

“Fuck,” Dream says, gently dropping George’s legs back onto the sheets. George stares up at him with a tired smile, looking so pretty it drives Dream insane. “You’re beautiful,” Dream compliments softly with excitement bubbling inside of him. He finally has the chance to say everything he’s wanted to say all the other times they’ve done this. “I love you,” he whispers for what feels like the hundredth time today, “I love you so much, George.”

Dream waits expectantly, heart pushed out of his sleeve and waiting on an open palm for George to take. (It’s always been George’s anyway.)

George looks away and Dream won't lie, it stings, but he knows that George has never been expressive. He should be grateful that George confessed, let alone did it first, so he gulps down the hurt and decides to ask a question instead. Something to prompt a conversation so that it doesn't feel closed off like every other time they've done this. This time is supposed to be different, isn't it?

"George," he calls out shyly and George replies with a quiet 'yeah' that has Dream hesitating on pursuing the following conversation. "What- um, what are we?"

The intensity with which Dream stares allows him to catch every miniscule movement of George's. This includes the way George's muscle slightly tense at the question, as if he's been dreading it all along. Like Dream has just pierced his safe bubble of no worries, no stress, just the two of them here, right now.

It leaves Dream feeling conflicted. He knows that he should appreciate the way George is absorbed in them taking this minute by minute, but it's natural for him to worry about the future. Their future. Because a lot of his future is George's future too. They do everything together, romantic feelings aside; so how are they gonna go from here? This is uncharted territory for both of them.

Finally, George replies, but all he says is a quiet, "What?"

He knows very well what Dream is talking about, he's just utilizing their infamous little strat. The one where they bullshit people by making it seem like their question is too stupid to repeat. The one George taught him.

"What are we, George?" His voice comes out more firmly this time, leaving zero room for beating around the bush.

George can tell that Dream would rather not deal with any immature avoidance and he sighs. "What do you want us to be?"

Dream frowns at that. "We," he corrects. "What do *we* want us to be? Not just me. This is your decision as much as it is mine."

He knows what he wants them to be. He just doesn't know if it aligns with what *George* wants them to be. The thought alone is scary, given that they've both been brutally honest about their feelings and if George *doesn't* want to pursue what they've got going on, Dream doesn't know how

they'll backpedal.

George continues to remain silent and Dream chooses to guide him with his own thoughts. "I just want to be with you," Dream whispers quietly. "I want us to be together, whatever that entails. Us, *this* can be figured out, but we need to work on it together, George. Slowly. You and me."

Honestly, they look comical from an outsider's perspective. With Dream pouring his heart out and George being unresponsive, it's like watching someone talk to a wall. Dream tries everything: leans down and tilts his head to meet George's eyes, smiles in a way that's broken but reassuring, and even hooks their fingers together. George grants him a quick glance and then shakes his head.

Tomorrow, the action reads. Dream is sick of *tomorrow*'s.

Tomorrow is the 13th. It marks their last week here, together, where *George* can't hide behind a screen.

"I don't know," George says, frantically grabbing Dream's hand when Dream moves to pull away. Dream pulls away regardless.

"You don't know?" He asks, gaze burning holes into the sheets under his knees. "You don't know if you want to be together? To be with me?"

"Dream," George sighs *again*, like this is a problem for him. He pushes himself to sit up and grimaces at the feeling of cum drying on his body. Dream uses it as an excuse to shuffle out of the bed and away from George. He quietly locates the box of tissues in the room and George watches him. "Dream, stop acting like this. You *know* it's an important decision for us to make. Our careers could--"

Dream slams the box of tissues down on the bed. It doesn't make any noise, but it's enough to startle George.

"Our careers?" Dream repeats in disbelief. "George, I would drop everything in a heartbeat if it meant I could be with you."

And he means it. Maybe it's his damaging impulsiveness, but he knows he would give up everything and anything for a chance to be with George. He doesn't expect George to do the same,

it's selfish and he knows it, yet everything from today is adding up and Dream speaks before he can stop himself.

"I'd do it without thinking! Because you mean that much to me," Dream spits out. "But clearly I don't mean that much to you."

It feels silly. Wiping himself clean and tucking his dick back into his pants silently while George just stares at him. He steps away, reaching down to grab the forgotten shirt on the floor, and then tosses it to George who barely catches it in time.

"You *do* mean that much to me," George argues under his breath while he wipes himself clean. His eyes remain focused on his clothing as he pulls it back up, but Dream can tell that he has all of George's attention, so he stays. "I'm just being reasonable, Clay. We're best friends, this could change everything."

"It's *already* changed everything. From our first kiss—even before that! From when I first started liking you. Nothing's been the same since then, George."

"Well then maybe I want things to go back to normal."

The sentence nails itself into Dream's chest like a shard of ice, cold and sharp enough to kill. The rage from before ebbs into disappointment, sadness causing the corners of his eyes to droop.

"Don't you want to create a new normal? With me?"

George's hesitancy is what finally shatters Dream. Their happiness dies as fast as it blooms and Dream is left staring at the mess because how did it come to this? Minutes ago they were kissing like their lives depended on it, like they loved without anything to fear, like all they needed was each other. Now they were standing further apart than they've ever been with a wedge between them (that they're no longer ignoring).

"I've- uh," Dream says, taking a few steps back. "I've gotta go."

He rushes for the door, fingers fumbling with the lock and struggling to twist it open because he can barely breathe let alone focus on anything else. Behind him, George shuffles in the bed with the same amount of panic and Dream grows more desperate, wanting to leave before he hears

anything else.

“Clay,” George calls out, nearing Dream slowly like the taller man is a frightened animal that he doesn’t want to scare off. “Clay, stop, that’s not what I meant, you know that.”

The lock finally comes undone and Dream doesn’t hesitate to swing the door open. He turns around one final time, unable to prevent himself from giving George another chance because that’s all he ever does: make excuses for the brunet’s behavior due to a stupid little thing called love.

“Tell me that you want this, that you want *me*, and I’ll stay,” Dream says, breathing heavily from the exertion brought about by trying to suppress his upcoming tears. “Tell me—George, just tell me you love me.”

Dream curses Aphrodite for being so conniving. For finding a way to make him lose hope when he thought their love could prevail.

His voice cracks like his splintered heart, “*Do* you love me?”

George loves him too, Dream *knows* that. He just wants to hear it.

They’ve been through so much already. The exhaustion from doing their job and doing it well, the stress from putting their fans first, the pressure from the antis that are so quick to judge. They’ve dealt with it all for so long now and the only reason they’ve gotten through it is because they’ve done it together. Of course it’s not only them, it’s also Sapnap, and Alex, and Karl, and Bad, and a lot of other people, but they aren’t going anywhere either.

They can get *through* this. They just need to want it enough—want *each other* enough—*love* each other enough.

George doesn’t say anything and Dream sighs, running a hand through his hair.

This is his answer, but it’s so hard for Dream to accept.

So, when Dream takes a step back and turns around, he gives George *another* chance. He lingers

by the door, praying that maybe, just maybe George will reach out.

He waits one more second, hoping for something, even the tiniest sign that George wants this (*them*) as much as he does. A hum of agreement, a small touch, anything.

Nothing comes.

Dream decides he can't keep waiting around, following George like a lost dog. He lets go of the door handle and wordlessly steps out into the hallway. He hears the sounds of his friends joyously conversing downstairs and envies their happiness. It makes him more reluctant to head towards them and he considers locking himself in the bathroom.

But as soon as he takes a step, trembling arms come to rest around the middle of his torso, stopping him in his tracks. They're quick enough to seem desperate, but hold loose enough to seem shy. Dream stands still, surprised at the warmth that engulfs him with George pressed up behind him. Then, a chilly whisper hits the nape of his neck and slips down his shirt. So quiet, it sounds forbidden.

"I do," George muffles into Dream's shirt, tightening his hold and refusing to let Dream turn around. Be it out of fear or embarrassment, Dream doesn't know.

"I love you."

Chapter End Notes

See I could've left you guys at another cliff-hanger, but I didn't.

I could've broken your hearts at the end, but I didn't.

I feel like most of the story lead to the confession, right? So here's the confession. However, I never planned to end it there and I don't feel satisfied with it either. This might be obvious since the end of this chapter doesn't feel like the End of all Ends.

That's because it isn't.

Like I said in the chapter, they've got a week left. That's enough time (a chapter? two?) for us to dive into their relationship dynamics and see how they figure this out together, *if* they figure this out. Can you tell that I'm a fan of angst yet?

As always, I hope you guys are well! Drink water, get some rest, and have a lovely

day/evening/night. Thank you for being patient and amazing.

I'll try to reply to some comments soon (I appreciate all of them!), but feel free to shoot me a dm on [twitter](#) if you'd like to chat! :)

Quarter to Midnight

Chapter Summary

All things considered, one measly question shouldn't be that difficult for Dream to ask and yet somehow it is.

Chapter Notes

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's weird to say the least.

Waking up with George in his arms, kissing him without a reason, freely doing all things he was scared to do before. No consequences, no lingering worries or fear, just the two of them living by the minute.

It's weird, but it's not unwelcome.

Dream can't express into words how happy he feels now that he's finally able to show his love in full throttle. It remains private, but it's enough for now. At least that's what Dream thinks. He likes being able to do the things he once wished for; things that seemed so unattainable yet have turned into the norm. There's a stinging reminder at the back of his head, like a needle poking him back down from cloud nine, that George is going back to England soon.

All of this will fade. Dream doesn't know what he'll do when that happens. How is he going to get used to no longer having George this close? His soft touch, his calming scent, his addictive taste; it'll all vanish, revert to how things were when Dream was longing from an ocean away.

"I wish you could stay," Dream whispers into George's hair whilst the other remains asleep in his arms, blissfully unaware of the sadness that lurks in Dream's heart.

The clock is ticking. They all leave the morning of the twentieth. As much as Dream wants to wake

George up so that he can talk to him all he'd like, he can't find it in his heart to cut his lover's sleep short. He's weak. George *makes* him weak. Especially when he looks so peaceful and pretty, lying in Dream's arms to display the extent of his trust.

There's nothing more to say and yet Dream's chest aches with repeated confessions and broken promises. He wants this to last forever. Maybe not in Karl's house, maybe not with their best friends right down the hallway, and definitely not with the impending sadness tomorrow will bring, but he wants something similar. George in his arms while they lay in bed, slowly starting their days together.

George stirs awake after a few more minutes of unconsciously rubbing his cheek against Dream's chest. He blinks away his bleary sight, small fists rubbing at the corner of his eyes, and hastens to sit up, suddenly aware of what day it is. Dream watches him with a fond smile on his face, arms interlocking behind his head, and winks when George glances over his shoulder to meet his gaze. They share a knowing look, filled with love and a sprinkle of guilt. Guilt for not having solidified what they had sooner; guilt for wasting so much time hiding from one another when they should've been honest.

"Morning," George mumbles, reaching out to run his fingers through Dream's messy locks. A good night's sleep is never kind to Dream's hair, but George finds that rather endearing. "How long have you been up?"

"Not that long," Dream lies, sitting up as well and wrapping an arm around George's waist so that he can drag him in for a sweet morning kiss. It's chaste, only meant to encourage George to fully get up; a hint as to what he could have if he doesn't laze around for 'five minutes more' like he always does. "What do you wanna do today, baby? Besides me, of course."

The pet name and innuendo have an immediate effect on George, inviting a pale cherry to stamp his cheeks. "God, at least give a man some kind of warning first."

Dream laughs at the embarrassed whispers and leans in to deliver a few more doting pecks, attempting to steal the color off George's cheeks but only darkening the hue. Eventually, George redirects Dream's lips to his and they share another meaningful kiss. Before it can delve into anything more, Dream slowly pulls away and nudges George's nose gently with his own.

"I'll go wash up first and then I'll make you some breakfast, yeah?" Dream buries the offer in George's hair, waiting for the sleepy nod of approval before pulling away and tossing the covers off of himself. He swings his long legs over the edge of the bed and then pushes himself up. "Don't fall back asleep, George, I mean it."

Not even a second after Dream leaves the room, he hears the soft thump of George's back hitting the sheets again and he chuckles to himself. He doesn't know why he still bothers with asking that of George when George has been anything *but* compliant with that simple request for the past month. It's cute though. Everything about George is cute.

Washing up is relatively quick for Dream. His routine consists of washing his hands, brushing his teeth, and then splashing water on his face. Maybe he should buy more skincare products, but eating healthy already keeps his skin clear. It's part of the reason why George likes playing with his cheeks so much. Because the skin is smooth and feels nice underneath the touch of his fingers, or so he says.

As for breakfast, George barely wakes up in time for that, so Dream tends to make him something light. This is if the others haven't already made breakfast and saved them some leftovers (which usually isn't the case because they trust Dream the most in the kitchen.) Dream prepares the usual: a few slices of toast, scrambled eggs that are rightly seasoned, and cut fruit.

The second person to wake up is Sapnap, joining him in the kitchen to steal all the watermelon slices out of the bowl. Dream scolds him playfully, but Sapnap shrugs.

"You snooze, you lose."

Everyone else seems to share this mindset. Karl wakes up next, buttering two slices of toast and then disappearing in his room to prepare the stream he has planned for the afternoon. Alex is after him, taking a sizable portion of the strawberries and also the pieces of scrambled eggs with the most seasoning. George loses to nobody's surprise, but Dream lets him choose what he wants to eat before snacking on the remains.

Alex mutters something about borrowing George and then disappears in his room, locking Sapnap out in the process. Sapnap doesn't seem to mind that much and helps Dream with the dishes.

"Have you asked him yet?" Sapnap yawns, placing the last plate in the dishrack before shaking his hands dry. Dream sends him a bewildered look only for Sapnap to send one back. "Dude, aren't you gonna ask George to come stay with us?"

Oh, *that*.

To be fair, he had thought about asking George to stay a couple of times, but the rational part of his

brain would always dismiss it. George was only planning to stay for a month. He has family back in England, he has friends, he has all his things. It would never work out. Unreasonably asking him to stay when his departure was tomorrow seemed unnecessarily cruel, like driving a knife into his back knowing he wouldn't be able to pull it out. It would just cause George to overthink and stress out when he could be enjoying his time while it lasts.

"Visa and all that," Dream mumbles, rubbing the nape of his neck. "Besides, I don't think he wants to. He only packed for a month. For the meetup, that's it."

Sapnap sighs, leaning against the kitchen island and looking up at Dream with his eyebrows pinched in concern. "We can work out the visa. He's under your merch company now, it should be easier, and we can buy him new things. We're not exactly poor, Dream."

Dream grimaces, expressing his uncertainty, and Sapnap groans as he pulls out his phone and types something into a search bar.

"Look!" Sapnap says, pushing his phone in Dream's face. "Up to 90 days without a visa and he's only been here for 30. That's like two more months, dude. That's a lot of time! Are you really gonna let that go?"

Dream glances out the window perched above the sink, pursing his lips to the side. It's plausible, as much as he's scared to admit it, and it would be a lot nicer than talking to him in discord and waiting for his next visit. At the same time, the reasons from before spring up again and in the end, George isn't prepared to stay that long and he probably won't want to.

"He's our best friend, Clay," Sapnap urges, a bit shocked that Dream is being so reluctant on something they've both spent months wishing for. "And I know he'll say yes!"

"He's never brought it up," Dream dismisses with a shrug. George never brings anything up and that's part of the reason why Dream is so afraid to.

"Maybe because he's waiting for you," Sapnap replies easily and Dream watches his gaze drift to the door that George is standing behind. "I mean, have you even asked him to be your boyfriend yet?"

That causes Dream to choke, spluttering on nothing but the air that he was inhaling. He hunches over the sink, one hand gripping the edge of it whilst the other covers his mouth. A series of pained

grunts leave him after that until he finally recovers and catches Sapnap staring at him with an amused smirk.

“You know?” Dream whispers shakily, surprised by the extent of Sapnap’s knowledge.

“Dude, you fucked on my bed,” Sapnap hisses, his dictation of the vulgar word only serving to fluster Dream further. “You guys did a horrible job of cleaning up, by the way, and you owe me for that, fuckers.”

Dream groans in embarrassment, covering his face in both his hands. This is the shame he should’ve felt when he had his dick in between George’s thighs, fucking them both into oblivion. On Sapnap’s bed of all places. It would probably be best for him to stop thinking with his dick so much. Of course, when George leaves Alex’s room and blows Dream a kiss filled with mirth, the glimmer in his eye looking like an invitation more than simple admiration, Dream realizes that first, George needs to stop being insanely attractive.

Of course neither of them act on it. They’ve got Karl’s stream to attend in less than an hour and George is too sadistic for them to finish that quickly.

“Can you stop eye-fucking your almost-boyfriend and go get ready, moron?” Sapnap scoffs, pushing Dream’s arm gently before excusing himself and heading down the hallway that leads to Karl’s bedroom.

“Good morning again,” George greets, appearing right as Sapnap leaves. He eyes the disappearing silhouette in bemusement before raising an eyebrow at Dream. “What were you two talking about?”

The dry cough from earlier returns and Dream is huddled over once more, but this time he has George gently caressing his back, helping him through it. It’s not as serious as Dream dramatically makes it out to be, but it’s still a little painful and George rushes to get him a cup of water. Dream takes a few sips, calms himself down, and then thanks George by bestowing a gentle kiss onto his forehead. George smiles back at him, albeit shy and hidden in Dream’s chest, but everything is cut short when someone clears their throat from the archway leading into the living room.

Alex is standing there with an unreadable expression, gaze flickering between the two of them before casting aside. Wordlessly, he opens the fridge and grabs a bottle of water and then walks away, leaving Dream and George standing awkwardly in the kitchen, confused at what just happened. They look at each other and then at Alex as he walks up the stairs and back into his room.

“Feels like our little secret,” Dream starts, running a hand through his hair. “Isn’t so much of a secret anymore.”

George curls his fingers around the collar of Dream’s shirt, dragging the taller man down for another soft kiss on the lips that is too short for Dream’s liking and feels a lot like revenge for earlier. “Well, it was never little to begin with either.”

The fact that George seems more nonchalant about the others finding out than Dream does is surprising and leaves Dream feeling giddy. If it were up to Dream alone, the others finding out would be a question of when not if or how. And *when* would be soon, very soon, immediately-after-the-confession soon. It’s not because Dream likes to rush things because he doesn’t, if that wasn’t obvious enough already. It’s more because Dream wants to show George off. Wants to post photos of him with silly captions, wants to make loving tweets about him, wants to kiss him in front of all his friends.

Dream wants everyone to know that George is his. That he’s lucky because out of all the people in the world, George chose him. George, who is known to be funny and sweet and charismatic. George, who is in tiktok after tiktok, fancam after fancam, for his pretty looks. George, who is one of the most talked about celebrities of today, is Dream’s.

Dream isn’t really all that possessive.

“I won’t be able to stream with a facecam for a while,” George chides, running his fingers down his neck when the two of them re-enter their bedroom. “You have to aim lower next time, idiot.”

Okay, maybe Dream is a *little* possessive. You can’t blame him though.

“Just use makeup or something,” Dream mumbles, winding his arms around George’s waist as they stare at their reflection in the mirror. He sways them back and forth gently, earning a pleased hum out of George, but the smaller man pushes him away regardless. “Ow.”

“That did *not* hurt, loser,” George laughs, turning around and poking Dream’s nose with his finger. “And I am not spending hours applying makeup onto all of these,” George gestures by tugging down the collar of his shirt and displaying more prominent marks all over his pale skin. “Aim. Lower.”

Dream pouts, “Fine. But you have to kiss me first.”

There’s a bit of reluctance from George, but that’s because he’s skeptical of Dream’s motives. “Something tells me that’s not all of it.”

He gives in to his desires in the end, but he makes sure to pull away before Dream can eagerly lap into his mouth like a man dying of thirst. Dream chases him with a whine and George gives him one more kiss out of pity. Their lips mold together perfectly and Dream let's George guide them at a slow and steady pace. It feels nice to kiss and to be kissed like this, to take their time slowly reintroducing themselves to one another as if they taste new each day.

The second time they pull away, George gives Dream’s lower lip a teasing tug and Dream grins, “You’re getting pretty good at this.”

George hums, tracing soft circles onto his lover’s rosy cheeks with his thumbs. “I’ve had a bit of practice.”

That elicits a laugh from both of them and Dream leans down, intending to reward George with another kiss, but George slips away before Dream gets the chance to. He mouths ‘later’ and then sits down on his chair, turning on his computer and setting up his equipment.

When Dream finally gets settled into his chair with his discord app pulled up on his monitor, George taps his shoulder. Dream hovers his mouse over the voice channel he plans to join and slips his headphones off, facing George to see what he wants. George glances down at his chair and then reaches over to gently tug on Dream’s shirt. The message is hard to decipher, but Dream wouldn’t be George’s best friend if he didn’t understand.

With a huff, Dream curls his hand around George’s arm rest and then drags him in close until their chairs are as tightly pressed together as they can be. George slips his hand into Dream’s and drags it over to his side of the desk. Dream can feel the edge of the keyboard digging into the back of his hand, but he doesn’t care too much because George is giggling with glee as he drags Dream’s hand around each time he types something out.

“You’re clingy,” Dream teases and George doesn’t deny it, but responds by sticking his tongue out.

After another minute or so, Dream prides his gaze away from George’s pretty face and mumbles that he’s joining the voice channel. He watches George’s icon appear almost at the same exact time

and chuckles fondly. Bad, Skeppy, Alex, Karl, and Sapnap are all already engaged in some sort of heated debate so their first reaction is to immediately interrogate Dream and George into picking a side.

“Who do you think would win in a 1v1 between Karl and Quackity?” Bad asks, speaking over Karl and Alex who are eagerly defending themselves.

“Neither,” George scoffs, leaning back in his chair and then waiting to see who reacts first. Alex mutters a curse under his breath and George sneers. “I’ll say Karl though, just because I don’t like Quackity.”

“You are such a bitch,” Alex laughs, completely ignoring Bad’s umpteenth ‘language’. “Okay, okay, *Dream*. Dream, you think I would win though, right? Be honest.”

Skeppy sounds distant when he interrupts them with a shout, “You can’t just like.. persuade him to convince you!”

“Shut up before I *persuade* Badboyhalo into having se-”

“Language! Quackity, don’t you dare finish that!”

George squeezes Dream’s hand to get his attention and Dream cuts his laughter short to face him. He raises an eyebrow challengingly, as if daring Dream to go against him, and although Dream does think that Alex has a fair chance of winning, he gulps and decides that it’s probably safer to lie and side with Karl.

“I think,” Dream says with a nervous chuckle. “Well, to be fair, I think you both are around the same level, but.. I’m gonna go with Karl.”

“Boom! Let’s go, baby!” Karl rejoices.

Sapnap’s voice cuts in, “*Baby?*”

Their bickering continues for a few more minutes. Karl mutes and deafens at one point to start his

stream and everyone else slowly calms down from their rowdy behavior so that the fans don't get shocked by the volume of their shouts later. Dream remains silent, only offering a chuckle here and there. He finds himself staring at George again and for some reason, this doesn't feel that different from when George was back in England. Back when Dream would find himself staring at George's stream despite them being on call already and despite there being a delay. Just to see George scrunch his face at things he finds weird and shyly bite his lip at things he finds flustering.

It doesn't feel that different, but Dream prefers watching George like this a lot more. He likes having George a few feet away from him with their hands intertwined. Sapnap's voice rings in Dream's head, encouraging him to pop the question, but Dream's inner voice shoos it away. *Maybe later, it bargains, the stream is more important.*

In all honesty it feels like another excuse. Karl's stream isn't anything big. It's an Among Us lobby with the 7 of them as well as Tina, Corpse, and Brooke. Dream could ask George to move in with him right now, while everything's still getting set up, and it would probably be done and over with before Karl came back, but he can't. He's scared of rejection yet *again* and he would rather not mope all game and have his fans worry. So, he decides that 'maybe later' is the safest choice and he should stick with it.

"Dream, fight me right now," Alex barks into his mic, spurred by the embarrassment of losing. "Give me like netherite armor and ten- fifteen rows of hearts and I bet I can take you. Tell him Bad!"

Dream laughs at that, having yet to peel his gaze from George, "I highly doubt that, but I can't. George is-"

George squeezes his hand tightly and shakes his head. Dream frowns.

"I mean, it'll take too long to load minecraft. Maybe later."

Soft dings from his headset let Dream know that the other three members have now joined the call. Dream doesn't bother looking at his screen, but he does greet them eagerly and they reply with just as much enthusiasm. Sapnap and George decide to pester Tina with their ingenious nickname 'TunaKitten', earning a playful groan from the victim of their light hearted bullying. Dream feels George let go of his hand and gently brush it aside so that he can spam the nickname in Karl's chat with ease.

Dream misses the warmth, but he keeps quiet.

“George,” a quiet voice speaks and Dream perks up because of who it belongs to. “I was wondering when we were gonna go on that date? Remember? Last time- last time we streamed together.”

Dream hates how suave Corpse sounds even when he stutters. He also hates that he can't hate Corpse because Corpse is clearly joking *and* he's a good guy, so this venom he feels in his chest is his *own* fault. He can't help the pout that his lower lip juts out to form and he glances at George for some sort of comfort, but George is too occupied with styling his Among Us character.

“Oh, right,” George replies and then laughs softly. “I didn't know you were serious.”

Dream doesn't like this bit. His fingers itch to tell Karl to start the game, but that wouldn't help anyway since proximity chat is on.

“I DM'd you,” Corpse says, sounding a bit accustory and Dream snorts at the following comment. “Like right after the stream and,” there's a pause for Corpse's (annoyingly attractive) laughter, “You haven't replied yet.”

That makes Dream smile to himself. George is bad at responding to messages, that's no secret, but still. He would much rather *not* have his.. almost boyfriend entertain another man. Normally, he wouldn't mind it this much knowing that they're both joking, but the fact that they haven't even clarified their exclusivity makes Dream worry. It's irrational. He *knows* that George isn't going to frolic in the sunset with someone else, but when has Dream ever thought rationally when it comes to George?

“Oh, I must've forgotten, sorry,” George giggles apologetically and clicks his tongue against the roof of his mouth. “I'll reply later.”

“Well, I mean,” Dream finds himself mumbling as the game starts. “Why would you want to if you have me?”

Corpse erupts into gentle laughter which the others join in on. A few of them make teasing comments about how Dream is pandering and Alex calls them disgusting before they all disperse from the cafeteria. The voices slowly fade as they disappear to do their respective tasks until Dream can only hear Karl, Corpse, and George in admin. He lingers by the door, wary of an early double kill, but Karl and Corpse run past him once they're done swiping their card.

Dream feels a tug on his arm and he quickly mutes his mic before pulling off his headset. “Yeah?” He says a little too eagerly, happy that George is finally giving him attention. “What’s up?”

“Dream, be careful of what you say,” George warns gently before he redirects his attention back to the game, leaving Dream sitting there dazed.

Slowly, Dream readjusts his headset and then quietly clicks his keyboard, moving his character down to the storage room so that he can empty the trash chute. He stands there idly after he’s done, trying to figure out what he’s done wrong.

Had he done something wrong? Sure, he spoke out of jealousy, but that flame had died quickly and he hadn’t spoken with any evident malice in his voice. It’s nothing different from the things he usually says; in fact, he’s sure he’s said worse. He’s mentioned thinking of cum in relation to George on one of the jackbox games. A little possessiveness isn’t going to phase their friends or their fans.

Dream sighs and shrugs it off, telling himself that George is probably just nervous since this is their first public ‘appearance’ since the recent development. He sees Tina and Brooke wiggle around his character, but he doesn’t get to react before they run off in the direction of the electrical room. That’ll definitely paint him as suspicious later. Just as he’s about to re-enter admin and check the map, a body gets reported.

“I found Bad in upper engine,” Sapnap informs the rest of them.

There are two x’s on the screen. Bad and Karl. Dream doesn’t remember what direction Bad had headed off in, but he does remember seeing Karl with Corpse.

“I saw Karl with Corpse earlier, but it was a while ago, so it might not be him,” Dream mentions and a chorus of suspicious ‘oo’s sound from their friends.

Of course, Dream isn’t let off the hook either and Brooke is quick to add on, “Well, Tina and I saw you lurking in storage for like five minutes, Dream. What were you doing then?”

Dream purses his lips together, not having enough time to think of a viable lie. “I was thinking.”

“Thinking about.. murdering someone!?” Tina accuses and Dream denies it quickly, but she’s not the only one that tries to set him up.

“He was thinking about this fucking dick,” Alex laughs and Bad screams in agony at the suddenly vulgarity. “Bad, shut the fuck up, you’re dead!”

Bad whines in defeat and Alex apologizes through a fit of giggles. Everyone seems to forget what they were just talking about and Dream is thankful because of how terribly weak his lie was. It wasn’t even a lie, just a very vague truth. He’s supposed to be *good* at lying. If he keeps this up, he’ll lose and he hates losing. He can’t let these thoughts clog up his mind.

“Okay, so,” Corpse interrupts and his voice is still far too quiet, but deep enough to demand attention. “I split from Karl a while ago. I’m with George now. We’re in navigation discussing where to go for our date.”

Dream frowns and turns to face George who’s too busy smiling at his monitor to notice him. It makes Dream sulk even more until his forehead feels like it’ll permanently crease.

“Yeah, I’m gonna fly out to California before I go back to England.”

The jealousy inside of Dream accumulates and evolves into a mixture of anger and sadness. Funnily enough, the discovery doesn’t phase him; it seems like he’s become quite used to this over the last few weeks. He’s aware that George is joking, but if Corpse was serious, would George do it? Would he extend his stay in America? For him? For anyone that’s daring enough to ask? Maybe Sapnap was right—maybe George was waiting for Dream to ask. Maybe he wasn’t sure if what he wanted was what *Dream* wanted.

That notion is still hard to grasp. How could George not know that Dream wants him to stay? Dream has made his feelings very apparent with the way he’s been the textbook definition of a ‘fool in love’ for the past few weeks. Months, even, if they’re including the late night discord calls. It should be incredibly obvious that all Dream wants to do is spend every waking minute with George.

Then again, George *had* remained oblivious to Dream’s feelings up until a couple of days ago, so perhaps it’s not that obvious to him.

“Dream. Are you there?”

Dream snaps out of his thoughts when he hears Brooke's voice filter in through his headset. He glances at his monitor and finds out that he died, but he's not sure when or by who.

"Who is it?" Dream asks, moving his ghostly character around Brooke's in circles.

Skeppy and Corpse win the round easily. They start up again and this time, Tina and Sapnap follow Dream around and keep him distracted from his own thoughts. It helps ease the stress and he's actually able to focus on the game which isn't any good for the imposters. Dream finds out it's Bad and Karl quickly. This competitiveness of his stays and he ends up on a winning streak until the end of the stream, imposter games included.

Everyone leaves, except for the five that remain in the same house. They help Karl close the stream and right before he does, he asks if they'd like to scroll through the fanart tag of them together. Considering this is their last stream under the same roof for a long, long time, Dream is all for the idea.

George, on the other hand, is tired from being jostled awake so early and declines.

"It'll take forever," George whines after muting his mic. "You know it does, Dream. It's always one thing and then the next and the next-"

"Babe, let's just go through it," Dream mumbles, reaching out to card his fingers through George's messy fringe. George stares at him with widened eyes and Dream furrows his eyebrows together, confused by the wild expression. "What?"

"Is he whining?" Sapnap scoffs.

"Yeah," Dream replies casually.

Then he freezes. Slowly, he moves his attention to his second monitor where Karl's stream is pulled up. The entire chat is filled with the same kind of comments. Dream groans audibly.

He forgot to mute his mic.

Panic settles onto Dream's shoulders yet again, clamping down and making it hard for him to do anything but stare at the mess that he's made. The messages are flying by before he even has a chance to read them, but he knows what the contents will be anyway. He also doesn't have to check Twitter to know that a clip is circulating and that people might've even turned his slip-up into a trend.

"I'm just tired," George mutters into his mic, a yawn following shortly. "Bye!"

Dream can barely process what's going on before George reaches over and mutes his mic for him. He feels his headphones get tugged off and then his body is turned to face an infuriated George, face pink with humiliation.

"Are you kidding me?"

Dream's confusion only grows. Sure, he messed up, but it was just a tiny accident and yet George is acting like Dream had just given everyone a rundown of their entire relationship. Sex and confessions included.

This is the third time in less than two hours that George has shown such a strong distaste for Dream's display of affection. Earlier in the kitchen George had seemed so carefree about it, but now, he recoils like he can't stand the thought. On stream, in front of over a hundred thousand people, it's reasonable, but the first time had been with just two new faces. Bad and Skeppy. Dream and George have known them for years and it's obvious that they're not judgemental, so why did George seem so against them finding out?

"Sorry, it was a mistake," Dream replies, face pinched with hurt. "I didn't- George, I didn't mean to. I wasn't thinking properly."

"Sorry doesn't cut it Dream," George sighs, running a hand through his long, brunet curls that are desperately in need of a trim. "You've got to be more careful. Everything is on the line, you know that."

Dream's frown hardens. He doesn't understand what George means by that, so he asks for clarification, "Our careers?"

George nods as if it's supposed to be obvious, "That and our friendships, our families, everything."

Something inside of Dream snaps and he turns to face his computer screen, hitting the disconnect button before turning the entire device off. He yanks his headset away from where it rests around his neck, slams it down onto his desk, and then turns to face George again.

George stares at him in shock and Dream finally asks the question that's been bugging him since the start of George's new act, "We always joke around like this. Why are you pretending like it's such a big deal now? You said you didn't want things to change and here you are changing things."

Their red web of strings comes undone and tangles into unmoving knots.

"Jokes are jokes. *This* is reality," George answers, gesturing wildly in the air with his hands. "I'm not saying to stop everything! I'm just asking you to be more careful. We've talked about this already."

They have. During the confession, after the confession. It's a recurring topic in their conversations. Dream aches to show the world just how much he loves George while George would much rather have their love remain sheltered. It's not fair of Dream to force his desires onto George. He can wait. He's waited for so long, he doesn't mind waiting a few more, but George doesn't meet him in the middle and *that's* the part that stings. He knows that George has a hard time expressing his feelings and he would never force George into matching his fervor.

But what is a relationship without compromise?

"The concern for our fans and family, I get," Dream whispers, pressing two fingers against the bridge of his nose. "But our friends? Even Bad and Skeppy? Why are you so scared about them finding out about us?"

"Us," George mimics with a scoff and leans back, his chair squeaking in protest. "And what exactly are we, Dream?"

Dream swivels his chair around, pushing himself forward as he stares at George with an incredulous look in his eyes. The question is ridiculous. It's obvious what they are, is it not? Dream doesn't try to steal the stars off the night sky for just anyone.

"What the fuck is that supposed to mean?"

“It means,” George tilts his upper torso forward as well to meet Dream. “I’ve been waiting for you to ask, why haven’t you?”

Maybe it’s the pent up frustration or maybe it’s just the urge to stamp another mark on what he thinks might be taken from him, but George’s words kindle the dying flame in Dream’s chest. Label or not, George is *his* and Dream doesn’t like to share. He’s never tried to hide that. He’s never shied away from how much he enjoys being the center of George’s attention. Their friends have made jokes about how he always needs to be with George; how he’s in every call, even if he’s not an active participant in the conversation. Dream yearns to let everyone know that he won’t let them take George from him. And now that he has him in the way that he wants, that territorial urge has only grown.

It almost feels primal.

That doesn’t mean he won’t let George have his fun or that he doesn’t trust George. It just means he’ll kiss him hard enough to remind him where he belongs.

Dream reaches out, his hand finding one of its favorite spots around the back of George’s neck, and tugs with a ferocity that can only be matched after the collision of their lips. George’s hands find a steady grip on Dream’s shirt, pulling him in close until Dream nearly slips out of his chair.

“Come here,” George grunts, moving one hand down to Dream’s hips. At first, Dream hesitates from uncertainty, but then George yanks him forward and anchors him down onto his lap. “I said *come here.*”

Dream laughs, light and airy, his free hand gliding up to join the other around the back of George’s neck. George stares up at him, a smile adorning his pretty lips, and then he leans in again. The angle is a bit uncomfortable, but nothing they can’t work with. Their lips work feverishly, biting away the bitterness that taints their tongues and replacing it with savory thirst. Dream bites down on George’s lower lip, sighing softly when George grants him permission to feel the velvety texture inside his warm cavern.

George is Dream’s favorite taste. Sweet as always. He doesn’t want to forget that.

“You belong to me,” Dream whispers after he pulls away, massaging the nape of George’s neck with two fingers. “Do I need to ask for you to know that?”

George shakes his head, moving one hand up to cup Dream's cheek tenderly. "No, but it would be nice."

Dream drowns a giggle into another dotting kiss and then pulls away when he feels George crane his neck to keep their lips sealed. He moves to get out of George's lap but George's grip grows stronger as he whines in displeasure.

"Don't treat me like I'm fragile," George argues, bouncing his knee once to jostle Dream.

"Baby," Dream laughs, curling his fingers around George's chin and tilting his head to let the light hit the constellation of bruises on George's neck. "When have I *ever* done that?"

With another roll of his eyes, George eases his grip and pushes the blonde off his lap. Dream stumbles backwards and then offers George his hand, pulling the brunet up with him. There's a moment of silence where the two of them remain in each other's arms, foreheads pressed, and lips tightly shut to avoid voicing their lingering thoughts. They're both thinking the same thing.

What a shame it is that moments like this never last when it comes to them.

"How am I supposed to ask you to be my boyfriend," Dream murmurs, pulling himself away despite every fibre in his being gravitating towards George. "If you're too ashamed to be mine?"

How do I ask you to stay if you aren't with me in the first place?

He lets his hands fall from George's and he takes a step back, trying to finally define his boundaries and put an end to George's pushing. The floorboards creak underneath him, but he doesn't let any distractions—not even the quiver of George's lower lip—divert him from his goal. He needs George to actually understand him this time; he needs George to learn that making an effort and taking risks is necessary.

Dream's okay with a challenge, he welcomes it. He knows that everything comes with a price and he's willing to suffer such severe burns to protect what they have.

But he can't do that when there's nothing to protect.

It feels like they're walking in circles. Dream knows that George can feel it too. It's why George is biting his lip and staring at the ground, making Dream stand there and wait for him to figure things out. Like he always does. Dream can't possibly know the thoughts that are running through George's head and yet he hears each one.

He feels the way George is crumbling under all the pressure he's piling onto himself. The stress of infinite tomorrows, the harsh self-criticism. George cares as much as Dream does, but he keeps everything inside, and that's why it's all much more dangerous when it comes to him.

"Whatever it is you're afraid of," Dream says softly, eyes never leaving George. "We'll face it together, just like we said we would. You and me, George. Together."

George shakes his head, a soft sigh pushing past his bruised lips. "That's what I'm afraid of. There won't be a 'together' after I leave. Not really, not for a while."

Dream swallows thickly. The air is hard to push into his lungs; it feels as if his body is rejecting it. He finds himself drawn in again, closing that distance between him and George, because they've become each other's air. His hands cradle George's face before burying it into the safety that his chest provides.

"We'll figure this out together and we'll stay together, George. Always."

Dream hates making promises he can't keep.

Which is why he has no problem making this one.

A few shaky breaths later, George raises his hands and places them on Dream's back. He shakes the same way he always does when they argue like this and Dream holds him with just as much love as last time if not more. Yet something about this resolution feels different from the others. If up until now, they've made turn after turn and found themselves stuck in a never-ending maze, then now that they've met, they've learned to make their own way out.

"Perfect segway for something I've been meaning to ask you though," Dream chuckles, pressing his cheek against George's crown. He feels George shift in his arms, probably trying to get a peek at his face, but Dream doesn't have the courage to let him, so he tightens his hold. "And no, it's not about the boyfriend thing. I'll make it worth the wait, I promise. It's just- I'm not gonna ask you

that while we're standing in the middle of Karl's guest room."

George snorts quietly, "Then what *do* you want to ask me while we're 'standing in the middle of Karl's guest room'. Enlighten me."

Dream darts in a breath, trying to remember the words he has practiced in his head since forever. Before them, before this trip, before Sapnap moved in with him. Sure, the words have vastly changed and hold much more meaning now, but the end goal is the same. The end goal is to do what Sapnap has rightfully been driving him insane about.

To ask George to stay.

Ultimately, Dream can't recall the words he rehearsed, but it doesn't really matter. He wasn't expecting himself to. No matter how many times he recites things in front of a foggy mirror, he'll always be at a loss for words when it comes to George. His mind draws a blank to make more room for George, turns into a clean slate so that George can write his name all over it. It's why Dream can never think straight around him. It's why Dream said yes to teaching him how to kiss.

It's why Dream fell in love with him.

Dream inhales slowly, mustering up small ounces of courage with all the air he draws in. On the exhale, his words ride the wave out.

"George, will you move in with me?"

Chapter End Notes

Hello! Hope you guys are doing well.

This chapter is a little over 7k, so it's shorter than usual, if you've picked up on that. That's because I decided to split the last chapter into two.

I'm drawn to angst like a moth is drawn to light, however I'm easing up on that because I would like to focus on the fluffier dynamics of DNF for once in my life. This chapter still ended sort of angsty but I assure you the next one should be a little more heart-warming. It'll feel a bit like an epilogue, I think, based on my current outline. It's open to change though.

Thank you for sticking with me for this long! Here's my [twitter](#) where you can be informed about the final update or about any of my other upcoming works. :)

Fun fact but this update is a week before my birthday. I am turning old. :')

Curtain Call

Chapter Summary

There's a lot that Dream can finally say with certainty and freedom.

Chapter Notes

If Dream or George ever change their mind regarding shipping/fanfiction, I will be taking this fic down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The silence rests heavily between them.

Dream feels that same burn of ignited nerves racing down his spine from the tips of his ears, the path colored in an incriminating shade of red. At the same time, a shiver runs down his spine as if they're in the middle of December and not July.

December. Dream remembers when all he could think about was the thought of spending Christmas with George and Sapnap.

"It depends."

Dream snaps out of his thoughts, meeting George's tentative gaze with an excitement he has to contain so that he doesn't scare the brunette away. *Anything*, he wants to say. *Anything you want, anything you need for this to work, I'll make it happen.*

"On?" Is what he settles for as he twiddles his anxious thumbs.

George's nervous smile tugs higher on one corner than the other. It's coy, it's a slice of courage through layers of shyness, it's a reassuring answer. It's George's answer.

"How big is my room?"

The silence reintroduces itself, but this time it's more welcome. Instead of tension, there's breathlessness. Dream is awestruck and George is giddy. Laughter erupts from both of them; one laughs in disbelief, the other in victory.

Dream pinches the bridge of his nose, "You're- I- you're such an idiot."

"Wow, I haven't heard that one before," George retaliates, wiping the smug grin off his face to really drill in the sarcasm. "Real original, Dream."

"Shut up," Dream says in between laughs, taking a few steps forward with arms that are all too eager to engulf a familiar physique. "Shut *up*, George."

Fingers delve into soft fabric and Dream doesn't mean to, but his grip is strong enough to stamp reminders in the shape of fingerprints. George mumbles that it tickles, but Dream doesn't relent, only having enough mercy to move his hands down from George's small waist to his bony hips. The shirt falls too low for Dream to sneak his hands in and feel skin against skin, but that can wait.

Behind them, the sun peeks through the curtains and warmth lays a hand on Dream's back. He sighs softly, letting it relax him, and hunches over to rest his forehead on George's shoulder. They stay like that for a moment. One of George's hands remains loosely wrapped around Dream's wrist, the other playing softly with blonde curls in need of a trim. Dream finds it comforting and it's only when George squeaks about Dream's weight that Dream realizes he's nearly fallen asleep standing up.

His eyes are heavy from days of fretting and inconsistent sleep. George moves his hand down from Dream's hair, much to the taller man's dismay, and instead brushes his thumb over Dream's prominent eye bags. Nothing is said, but it's enough.

Dream will be able to experience more of these moments—moments where he and George don't do anything special, but feel as if they are. He'll be able to experience them in his home. Their home.

Shouting erupts down the hallway, startling both of them out of their romantic trance, but all they do is exchange bewildered looks and surprised giggles.

Dream thinks he could get used to this.

“Are you sure you got everything?”

Dream nods as Karl grills him, George, and Sapnap for what feels like the umpteenth time. It’s obvious he knows that at this point, after three rounds around the entire house, they haven’t forgotten anything, but he needs a reason to keep them there a little longer. Just enough to miss them less (which of course, only makes him miss them more).

“Charger? Toothbrush?” Karl asks, arms folded over his chest as he chews on his inner cheek.

Dream parts his lips to reply, but Sapnap beats him to it.

“We’ve gotten everything, don’t worry,” Sapnap says fondly, reaching out to lay a hand on Karl’s shoulder. “I’ll call you when I’m- we’re home.”

Dream looks away like he’s seen something he isn’t meant to see.

A few feet ahead, Alex and George are standing at the front of his car, chatting away and trying to squeeze in their last words together. Dream smiles to himself, watching as George and Alex lean closer and closer the longer they chat, both wanting to give the other a hug but being too shy to initiate it. Dream observes the two of them as they dance around each other for a little while longer and then, after he decides to spare them from embarrassment, he takes three strides forward. His right hand lets go of the duffle bag it’s holding onto and his arms spread out, hooking around his friends’ shoulders.

“Whoa,” Alex says, stumbling in surprise. Dream’s hold on him tightens to prevent him from plummeting ass-first onto the concrete. “Thanks.”

“I’ll miss you,” is Dream’s response.

In the corner of his eyes, he can see George gawking at him, probably baffled that Dream can say those three words so nonchalantly while he's been struggling to get them out. Dream bites back a smile and says nothing. George probably wouldn't appreciate whatever snarky comment he's thought of anyway.

"Aw, Dreamie," Alex playfully coos. His fingers reach up to tuck his fringe under the lid of his cap. "What about you Georgie, you're gonna miss me too?"

George scowls, but in this scenario, his lack of denial is as strong of a 'yes' as Dream's words.

Alex drops the joke with a relaxed laugh and it's quiet for a second (maybe more) before he pulls back from Dream's reach. Dream furrows his eyebrows in confusion, but is pleasantly surprised when he's met with a proper hug instead. Alex feels warm and snug in his grasp and Dream rests his cheek on top of his friend's head.

"I'll miss you too, man," Alex sighs.

The hug lingers for a second longer before both of them reluctantly pull away. Alex's gaze shifts from Dream to George, who has his hands tucked neatly into his coat's pockets, making him look anything but approachable for a hug. Regardless, Alex steps up and George reaches out for a handshake, but the second their hands meet, Alex yanks him forward. The look on George's face is priceless, eyes wide and lips parted.

"Stop being such a tsundere, George," Alex teases, snuggling even closer to George just to be obnoxious.

George pats Alex's back, hitting Dream with a bewildered stare. "A what?"

All Dream can give him is a laugh paired with an equally confused shrug. After that, he reaches down for his abandoned duffel bag and makes his way to the back of his car. The trunk's lid rises and he carefully fits the bag in with the others. It's a bit more crowded now with George's stuff adding to their pile, but nothing the car can't handle.

Dream quickly looks around them to make sure that's the last of their luggage before closing the trunk and making his way to the driver's seat.

“Dream, I *know* you’re not trying to leave without a hug,” Karl shouts with an accusatory stare.

With a guilty smile, Dream steps away from the car and towards the sidewalk where he waits for Karl to walk over. On his way there, Karl pulls George out of Alex’s arms and into his. It elicits a snicker from Sapnap who is frighteningly quick at taking a quick pic.

“Gonna miss you, bud,” Karl sighs, squeezing George in his arms one last time before pulling away. “Hey, if Dream and Sapnap are too much, you’ve always got a home here.”

“Hey!” Sapnap huffs.

Karl sticks his tongue out in response and while he’s distracted, George reaches out to offer him a gentle pat on the shoulder.

“Something tells me I’ll be taking you up on your offer very soon.”

Dream rolls his eyes at George’s joke, but before he can retaliate, a mop of light brown curls blocks his field of vision. A moment later comes unforgettable warmth that melts Dream until Karl’s arms are all that keep him intact.

“I’ll miss you.”

It’s a mystery who says it first, but finding out is unimportant. All that matters is that they’re both genuine and it shows in the way they remain in that embrace even after Alex teases them about it.

Ultimately what pulls them away is the alarms of Dream’s car terrorizing the neighborhood.

Dream quickly fumbles for his keys, spamming the lock button until the car ceases its wailing. When his nerves subside, he looks for the culprit and finds Sapnap and George standing by the passenger side door with guilty expressions.

“For that, *both* of you can sit in the back.”

“What-” Sapnap begins in protest.

“That’s not fair-” George cuts in.

“I *said* sit in the *back*.”

With a grumble, Sapnap swings the door to the backseat open and crawls in. Before George can follow, he shuts the door and gestures for George to go around the car and get in from the other side. George glances up at Dream for help, but Dream simply shrugs and George begrudgingly stomps his way to the other side.

Dream sighs as he opens the driver side door. He takes one last long look at the driveway he’s grown far too used to seeing and pushes down the feeling that bubbles in his chest. They’ll be back.

“Alright,” Dream says with a slight wave. “We’ll be back before you know it.”

He climbs in the car and tugs the door shut. The North Carolina breeze kisses him goodbye.

“Give me the aux.”

“No, I don’t want to.”

“It’s my turn. You’ve literally picked the last 3 songs.”

“Yeah, because your music taste is shit.”

Dream swears he loves his best friends more than anything, but at this point, he’s ready to pull over on the freeway and make them walk the rest of the way home. He knows he should be used to their friendly banter by now, but sometimes he feels like a single mom dealing with two teenagers in their rebellion phases.

There’s a bit of fussing and Dream thinks he hears someone bang their elbow against the door.

“Ow!”

Right, of course it would be George. Sapnap is a firm believer that music makes or breaks a road trip and as much as Dream would willingly do anything and everything for George, he has to admit that Sapnap has the better choices.

Thankfully, the traffic hasn’t been horrifically bad and it seems like everything’s running on schedule. They should be home a little after dinner time which means they can just grab some fast food on the way back, but Dream has a feeling they won’t be able to decide and it’ll end with them grabbing chips at a gas station.

Again, he’s not complaining.

In fact, it would be weird if things were going any differently. It would be out of character. Even if Dream may have lost count on how many times he’s rolled his eyes by now, he’s still having fun.

Dream lifts his gaze, peeking into the mirror for a second while the freeway is clear of any hazards. All he catches is Sapnap passionately singing along to the song that’s playing and George bopping his head in encouragement. Dream smiles to himself, shaking his head. The road ahead is dull and boring compared to what’s going on in the backseat.

Eventually the song comes to an end and he hears the same rustling from his troublemakers. There’s a tug here and there and the car makes a few questionable noises after being disconnected and reconnected so many times. It seems like George just can’t seem to win and Dream feels a little bad, but he knows that George doesn’t really care. He’s only keeping up the bit to annoy Sapnap and it’s working.

“I’m not gonna give you the phone just so you can blast ‘Roadtrip’ again.”

“But we’re literally on a road trip.”

“You’re an idiot. Shut up!”

“Wow so you’re- you’re saying you don’t like Dream’s song. That’s basically what you’re saying.”

“Dream’s the one that said to skip it!”

“Alright, everyone pick your favorite snacks,” Dream mumbles, unbuckling his seatbelt after safely parking at the lot of a gas station.

“Yes, mom,” Sapnap replies in a monotonous voice, being the first to bounce out of the car.

He has desperately needed to pee for the past half an hour but there had been no exits and now George has a video of him wiggling in his seat, trying to hold in his bladder. It’s no surprise that he’s so quick to rush inside the store, not even bothering to close the car door.

Dream laughs, pocketing his car keys before climbing out the car himself and pushing his car door shut. He waits for George to climb out, but George looks like he has no plans to move. Curiously, Dream takes a few steps back and then peeks in from the door Sapnap left open. George turns his head, blinks at him twice, and doesn’t say anything. His seatbelt is undone, but that’s all that Dream really gets to figure out his intentions.

“You coming?” He asks, leaning back and glancing at the store. “Or do you want me to get you something instead.”

“Are you sure it’s okay for you to go?” George asks with a slight frown. “Especially with us here.”

Dream forms a small ‘o’ with his lips and then waves his hand in the air dismissively. “It’ll be fine. They’re gonna see me eventually anyway, now that you’re about to move in.”

“Still,” George continues, but his posture is no longer stiff. “I don’t mind grabbing it for you.”

“I’m fine, George.”

Dream smiles, hoping it’ll convince George and although George nods in understanding, he still makes no effort to get out of the car. Dream gives him a second and then two and then three, but George stays put.

“Now what?” Dream asks, making a noise halfway between a laugh and a scoff.

“I’m waiting,” George replies.

It’s Dream’s turn to stare blankly. “I’m sorry? Waiting for what exactly?”

George sighs playfully as if it’s disappointing that Dream is asking. “For you to open the door.”

The loading symbol above Dream’s head makes another full cycle before the meaning behind George’s words finally reaches him. Then he snorts, closing the door he’s leaning on so that he can go all the way around the back of the car to reach George’s side. He bows dramatically, tucking one hand behind his back while the other tugs the door open.

“Your highness,” Dream says with his best British accent, swinging the door wide open. “My sincerest apologies.”

George laughs, hiding behind his hands. Dream takes the opportunity to pull his hand out from behind his back and extend it towards George, waiting for the brunette to take it. When George sees it, he makes a face, but he gives Dream one of his hands anyway.

“This is embarrassing,” George says when Dream guides him out of the car.

Dream shrugs, shutting the door once George is out and reaching into his pocket for his remote. Once he finds it, he presses the button to lock the doors and then makes a noise of satisfaction, letting George know that he’s good to go. He doesn’t need George to lead him the fifteen feet distance from his car to the store entrance, but—

George walks ahead, pulling Dream along with him.

—This way, Dream can see if George pulls his hand away or allows Dream to keep holding onto it.

“I’m not in the mood for chips,” George mumbles, tugging at the door handle. “Ice cream is better.”

“Cookie dough?” Dream raises an eyebrow, glancing around until he sees the Dunkin’ Donuts corner. “I’m feeling vanilla.”

“You’re always feeling vanilla,” George scoffs.

Neither of them realize what their words could imply until a man one aisle over barks out a laugh. Then George slaps his forehead and Dream bursts into giggles, cheeks red from the thoughts he refuses to voice. They loiter in the section for a few seconds longer, laughing at the dying joke, and by the time they’ve settled down, Sapnap has found them.

“I’m getting cheetos,” Sapnap says, shaking the bag in their face. “And maybe a gatorade since I’m feeling spicy. What about you two?”

“Ice cream,” Dream replies, taking a quick peek at where they’re headed. “You want?”

His eyes return to Sapnap, but Sapnap’s eyes are downcast. Dream looks at his shoes to make sure his laces aren’t undone.

“I’m good,” Sapnap says, taking a step back. “I’ll meet you two at the counter.”

Dream frowns at the abrupt departure and then looks at George for a second opinion. “That seem weird to you?”

George purses his lips together and for a second Dream is confused, but then he feels cold air instead of warmth against his palm. The dots slowly connect and Dream is quick enough to grab George’s hand again before he can run away.

“He just doesn’t wanna be a third wheel,” Dream says, unintentionally answering his own question.

George huffs, but intertwines his fingers with Dream’s anyway. “I don’t like the idea of there being a third wheel in the dream team.”

“As much as I love Sapnap, I’m gonna have to pass on inviting him into-”

“Ugh, you know that’s not what I meant, Dream,” George groans, hitting Dream’s chest lightly with his free hand.

Dream laughs it off, leaning down to nudge George’s forehead with his nose. “We were fine in the car right?”

George nods, his eyes quickly scanning the store, and in his shyness, he gently pushes Dream away. It takes everything in Dream not to lean down and steal a kiss from George right then and there.

While George is still distracted, Dream swipes something off of one of the shelves.

“We’ll have our trio time and our *us* time,” Dream mumbles. “We’ll make it work.”

He gets a smile in response and it’s all he can really expect. It’s not like they can break out into a deep conversation right now, so this is a discussion for next time. Next time being tonight at the earliest. As much as Dream wants to rest after a ten hour drive, he knows that neither of them will

be able to sleep these kinds of thoughts away. However, something tells him that George won't bring it up and Dream isn't sure if he wants to either. At least not just yet.

"Cup or cone?" George asks to change the conversation.

Dream squints skeptically at George, "I prefer cups since they're less messy, but I'll get a cone. I can't work with a spoon while I'm driving.. unless you're offering to feed me?"

"Shut up," George snorts. "Two cups then."

(Sapnap has a few words for them when George gets to sit shotgun.)

"Are you excited?"

Sapnap leans in, hovering over George's ear, and George instinctively jolts away. Dream laughs to himself at George's reaction, earning a pinch on his thigh which makes him dangerously swerve the car for half a second.

Instead of fearing for his life and regretting his actions, George seems perfectly content with his prank.

"Excited for what?" He finally answers Sapnap who has already leaned back out of disinterest.

"For moving into your new home, obviously," Sapnap clarifies. "*Our* home."

George rolls his eyes, letting that speak for itself, and Sapnap takes that as a clear sign that George *is* in fact nervous. This is neither confirmed nor denied by George and although Dream wants to

hear the answer as well, he figures he'll find out soon enough. They're only a few traffic lights away from home sweet home.

"What if Patches hates me?" George asks for the sake of switching topics.

"You've asked this so many times," Dream sighs, flicking his turn signal. "The answer's not gonna change, George. She's too sweet to hate anybody."

George has nothing more to say. He turns his cheek, staring out the window, and Dream hears him whisper whatever is written on the signs they drive by. Street names, speed limits, flashy ads, everything George will have to get used to seeing. Dream sneaks a glance in whenever he can, watching familiar lights dance in George's eyes, and a warm feeling blossoms in his chest.

He's certain that this feeling will never go away.

Dream's fingers grip the steering wheel a little tighter, his eyes stare at the empty street ahead a little harder, and each breath he takes sounds louder. The love he feels is overwhelming.

The light turns red and Dream brings the car to a gentle stop. A weight on his thigh causes him to jolt in his seat, but when he looks down to see pale fingers mimicking raindrops on his shorts, he relaxes. His eyes run up the length of George's arm and eventually land on George's face where a look of concern awaits him. Dream shakes his head once, a smile tugging on his lips, and George squints, but nothing is said. Instead, there's pressure around his thigh where George squeezes and then it's gone.

The car behind them honks and Dream apologizes under his breath, foot stepping on the gas pedal. Behind him, Sappap sneers. Dream meets his eyes in the rearview mirror, but it's short-lived because he has to focus on making a particularly sharp turn.

George's hands fly up, yanking his seatbelt with him as he gets jostled to the side. "I'm not trying to die today, Dream."

"And I am?" Dream snorts at George's dramatics.

They cruise down the street for a few seconds more until Dream moves his foot onto the brakes. George immediately perks up in interest and Dream grins cheekily.

“Just kidding.”

Sapnap lightly hits the back of Dream’s seat, a mirroring grin on his face. “I told him to do that by the way.”

George scowls at both of them, slinking back into his seat and folding his arms over his chest. Out of spite, he refuses to look out the window again, but Dream whines softly, muttering something along the lines of George missing out on his first experience in Florida, and George concedes.

“You guys are such idiots,” George grumbles, eyes following each house they pass by. His accent is heavier than usual, but Dream isn’t sure whether it’s intended or not. On one hand, George mocks his own accent frequently, and on the other hand, George *does* seem a little bit annoyed by their prank.

“We’re almost there,” Dream says softly, offering somewhat of a peace treaty.

“Fuck off.”

Dream laughs, leaving it at that, and then makes another turn at the stop sign. The houses grow more spaced apart the longer they drive down the winding road. There hasn’t been a shop in sight for the past ten minutes, just unnecessarily large lawns and driveways to match even larger houses. Dream knows living here is a bit much, especially for just three boys that game for a living, but he likes it. He likes being a safe distance from the city and he likes not having neighbors pressed up against him on either side.

He hopes George will like it too.

“Wanna guess which one it is?” Sapnap asks, popping his head in the space between the front seats.

George looks like he’s about to decline at first, but he bites back his answer and replaces it with a, “Fine.”

Dream slows down his driving, making it harder for George to tell, and George shoots him a glare,

but says nothing and focuses on the houses they pass by.

“This one’s got a ‘beware of dog’ sign plastered on the garage door so I doubt it,” George scoffs. “Next one seems more likely, but I’m gonna say no because of the hopscotch in the driveway. I don’t think even Drista would use that.”

Dream hums, neither confirming nor denying George’s guesses.

“This one has lawn decorations and both of you are too lazy to set those up,” George mutters, earning an offended huff from Sapnap and an eye roll from Dream. “The next one..”

George cuts himself off. Nobody says a word. Dream continues driving at the pace that he’s been at for a while now and Sapnap’s expression doesn’t falter once, both of them refusing to give George any sort of hint.

George doesn’t seem to need it anyway. “It’s this one.”

The house comes into full view slowly and George stares for a couple seconds longer before whipping his head around to face Dream and Sapnap.

“It’s this one, isn’t it? Tell me.”

George is met with silence again, but this time, he’s fed up with it and he reaches out to place a hand on Dream’s arm. It’s a light touch, but Dream can feel the urgency.

To answer him, Dream turns, pulling into the driveway. He’s no longer able to hold back his eager grin and neither is Sapnap. Both of them are giddy as the car comes to a careful halt and as soon as it’s safe to leave, Sapnap is leaping out of his seat and rushing around the back of the car to open George’s door. Dream smiles to himself, putting the car in park and turning off the engine, while George gets himself dragged out of his seat and yanked to the front door.

Dream takes his time, relaxing in the driver’s seat for a while longer as he watches his two best friends talk their excitement away in front of *their* house. He glances over at the empty seat where George was sitting a few minutes ago and can’t push back his thoughts of seeing him there again. Over and over. Driving to new cities, seeing new sights, going on dates. The possibilities are endless.

Dream wishes that this—the three of them enjoying such bliss—could be endless. He hopes it *will* be endless.

“Dream!”

The shout barely gets to him, sounding muffled and very distant despite Sapnap being only a few feet away. Dream glances at him in confusion only to see him gesturing wildly with his hands. He’s twisting it left and right and shouting something Dream can’t make out.

Dream pushes his car door open and steps out, nudging the door shut with his knee. “What?”

“The key?”

“Oh,” Dream says, almost laughing at his own stupidity.

He jogs up to them, isolating the right key on his chain, before placing it in the key hole. The lock clicks as Dream jiggles the key around and then he pushes the door open. Sapnap shoves past him, practically dying to give George a house tour, and George follows in shortly when Dream makes no sign of moving in first.

Dream waits for George to brush past him and right as he does, he leans down, breath warm as it fans over the tip of George’s ear.

“Welcome home.”

George makes a noise, the same one he always makes when he’s flustered, and Dream chuckles to himself. They don’t exchange any more words. George bounces over to Sapnap and the two of them disappear down the hallway.

Dream turns around, pressing a button to lock his car, and then closes the door behind him, making sure to twist its lock as well. He takes off his shoes, placing them neatly next to Sapnap’s, and then heads straight for the kitchen.

Once he's there, he takes out his phone from his pocket and does what he's been meaning to for the past few days.

His mom picks up on the second ring, "Hello, stranger."

Dream smiles, playing with a loose thread on his shorts, "Sorry, sorry, I meant to call sooner."

"Sure," she replies and Dream can almost hear her roll her eyes, "Sapnap calls me more than you, you know? I'm starting to wonder who my real son is."

"Hey," Dream can't fight the pout that forms on his lips. "I've just been busy."

It's true. He's been wanting to call her for a while now. Each hurdle he's ever faced has always seemed easier to jump when she's there to guide him, so he's not exactly sure why he's been silent this entire trip. Sure, they've exchanged a few messages and spoken here and there, but it's nowhere near how often he used to contact her whenever he was away from home. Dream's not sure why that is, but he speculates it has something to do with George.

"I bet," she says and Dream can hear the squeak of their old leather couch. He guesses that she's finally sat down to give him all of her attention. "Did you boys just get home?"

"Mm," Dream answers, eyes drifting to nowhere in particular. "We haven't unpacked yet."

"Drista can help with that tomorrow," his mom offers. "I'm planning to cook you guys lunch and she'll be bored otherwise."

Dream knows that Drista would much rather do anything else. He can already picture the sour look on her face when she's told to "help the boys unpack". This doesn't mean he won't use the opportunity to bully her though. There's a heavy bag waiting in the trunk of his car that he's already decided to make her lug inside alone. It's his brotherly way of saying he missed her.

"I'm sure that a teenage girl has much better things to do than help three adults unpack their luggage," Dream comments with a snort. "You guys don't have to do anything, really. We'll be fine."

“It’s my first time meeting George so I’m cooking, that’s final,” his mom replies and Dream sighs in surrender, but his mom drowns it out. “Drista’s been complaining about having to drop Patches off tomorrow by the way. She still doesn’t understand why you get to keep her.”

“Because Patches loves me more, duh,” Dream says, matter-of-factly.

“Not true!” Dream identifies the faint voice he hears as his sister’s. *“You just get more time with her because I have school! It’s not fair!”*

“Yeah, yeah, whatever you say, loser,” Dream teases and a loud groan bleeds in from the other end, followed by the sound of thundering footsteps.

“Aaaand she’s gone,” his mom says. There’s a beat of silence and Dream racks his head for something to say, but his mom beats him to it. “So, how are you and George?”

“Uh, hm?” Dream asks, slightly caught off guard by the question.

“You and George. How are you two?” she repeats, clarifying absolutely nothing.

“We’re uh, we’re good. We’re good,” Dream answers, clearing his throat and standing up a bit straighter. “Why- why wouldn’t we be?”

“Clay.”

Dream’s breath hitches, giving him away. There’s something in the way that his mom asks the question that makes Dream certain she means what he’s dreading. Well, dreading isn’t the right word. He’s in no way trying to hide what he and George have, especially not from his own family, but he’s just.. not prepared. Him and George have been dancing around each other for weeks and they’re still tripping over one another’s feet. He hasn’t had the time to think about how to break the news to anybody else when he’s barely processed it himself.

“We’re okay,” Dream says finally. It sounds too shaky to be sure at first, but when Dream hears George’s laughter ring through their halls, he feels more confident in his answer. “We’re okay. We’re making progress.”

“Progress as in?”

“Well, I asked him to move in,” Dream says, sheepishly scratching the nape of his neck. His mom knows this already, so he’s aware that it’s not what she’s expecting to hear. “I haven’t, uh, we’re not dating yet.”

There’s a soft hum from the other line and Dream wishes his mother would say something. Offer advice, change the topic, anything, but she doesn’t. She waits for him to elaborate because she wants to know more and she can tell that deep down, Dream has a lot he wants to get off his chest. She’s always known him better than he’s known himself, call it mother’s instinct.

“I’m worried,” Dream confesses with an exasperated sigh. “I know I don’t really have to be since I know what his answer is going to be, but I’m still- I’m still worried.”

“About?” his mother prompts gently.

Dream glances in the direction the voices are coming from, making sure nobody’s walking in his direction. The voices are still faint and Sapnap’s lights are still on, so Dream reasons that he’s safe for now. Still, his volume drops a notch.

“He mentioned that he was scared about ruining the dynamic between the three of us,” Dream mumbles, sliding his palm against his shorts, wiping off sweat that isn’t there. “I told him- I told him it would be okay, but- but I don’t know myself. What if I ruin this? What if I ruin our friendship? Not just me and George, but Sapnap too- our dreams- all of our dreams because of my- my *selfish* feelings?”

“Why is it wrong for you to want something?”

“That’s not it, mom, it’s- it’s more than that, it’s-”

“No, listen to me,” his mom interjects and her voice leaves no room for argument. “You remember that argument you gave me when I said no to you dropping out of school?”

Dream shakes his head and then feels like an idiot when he realizes what he’s doing. His mother seems to make an accurate judgement of his response from hearing the strands of his hair scrape against the speaker.

“You quoted something you learned in your business class to me,” she scoffs at the memory. “High risks equal high rewards.”

Dream grimaces. How could he forget? He’d felt so smart in that moment and his mother, despite having every reason to laugh, gave him her trust. At the time, he definitely thought he had won her over with his solid argument, but looking back on it, of course he hadn’t. Of course she’d just taken a chance on him because that was how much she had believed in him.

“You took a big risk dropping out, right? Things could’ve gone very differently. You could’ve failed at being a content creator, you could’ve never achieved your dreams with Sapnap, you could’ve never met George.

“Happiness doesn’t come for free, Clay,” his mom continues, voice curt to relay seriousness, but still soft enough to let him know that she’s worried. “You have to fight for it. You *need* to fight for it.”

“I know,” Dream whispers. His lashes bat away tears that have yet to be shed.

“Being complacent won’t get you where you want to be. Where do you want to be, Clay?”

Dream curls his other hand into a fist, watching as his fingers shake from the simple gesture. He doesn’t know. He doesn’t know where he wants to be. “I don’t know.”

“You do, baby.”

The echoes of unbridled laughter seek Dream out like little helpers, lifting Dream’s chin up and making him watch the shadows that mimic George and Sapnap as they travel from room to room. George’s exaggerated arm movements reveal that he likes their home as much as Sapnap does.

Something clicks in Dream.

“I want to be with them,” Dream whispers, hand reaching up to clutch his shirt. The ball of his palm digs against his beating chest. “I just want to be with them.”

“But you’re with them now, aren’t you? So what’s wrong?”

Sapnap tugs George down the hallway again and this time, Dream catches a glimpse of them. He sees the blush of joy that adorns George’s freckled cheeks and the ecstatic smile that’s never failed to brighten even the bleakest of days.

“I want more,” Dream admits, tearing his eyes away from the place where George was standing just a second ago. “I want more- I want- I just-”

“Take your time,” his mother coos, trying her best to soothe his nerves. “It’s okay, Clay. It’s okay to want something.”

Dream bites his lower lip, worrying it until his teeth nearly cut the swollen skin.

“I want to love him,” Dream finally says. “I want to love him freely.”

“Something tells me you both know that already.”

Dream chuckles at that, the tears finally falling from his burning eyes. He messily wipes away at them with the back of his hand, not wanting someone to walk in on him like this. His fears sound so much more foolish now that he’s said them aloud.

“We do,” Dream says with a sigh. “We’ve- we’ve *known*.”

“So, what’s stopping you?”

“I’m not doing it.”

“Come on, it’s *one* bag.”

“It’s heavy!”

Dream does his best to bite back a smile when Drista vehemently expresses that she would rather clean Patches’ litter box than lug Dream’s duffel bag into the house. Everything else has been moved in already and it would be easier for Dream to just pick the bag up himself, but he feels like teasing Drista for a little while longer.

“Weakling,” George joins in, ruffling Drista’s hair until loose strands are sticking out in a frenzied manner. “Don’t you wanna be like girl boss or something?”

“I hate you already,” Drista retorts, reaching up to fix her hair.

George simply messes it up again, “That’s not very nice.”

“What part of that sounded like it was meant to be nice?”

George makes a face of disbelief, looking to Dream for help, but Dream can only offer him a shrug. To this, Drista rejoices and George scowls, but Dream makes it up to him by leaning down and placing a gentle kiss on the top of his head. George immediately pushes him away, but instead of being from malice, it’s from utter embarrassment.

Drista is staring at them with wide eyes.

It’s no secret that Dream and George are whatever they are, but that doesn’t mean she was expecting to see anything.

“You guys are gross,” Drista announces, walking away with a playful look of disgust plastered on her face. “Blegh!”

“Yeah,” Sapnap agrees, peeking into the garage right as Drista leaves. “Blegh.”

“Shut up, Sapnap,” Dream replies, punching him lightly on the shoulder.

The scent of his mom’s cooking fills the house and Dream doesn’t need to look around to know that everyone’s ogling at the feast laid out on the dining table. There’s a slice of steak on everyone’s plate, cooked to each person’s preferences, with a side of spinach-and-artichoke dip and healthy greens. In the middle of the table, a bowl of pasta and a plate of ribs sit side by side, just in case anyone wants extra helpings.

“Thanks, mom,” Dream chirps, wrapping his arms around his mother’s shoulders and giving her a kiss on the cheek to show his gratitude. “Love you.”

“Love you too,” she hums while rinsing her hands in the sink. “Did you finish bringing the bags in?”

“There’s one left,” Dream replies, grabbing enough cups out of the cabinet for everyone. “Drista won’t bring it in.”

“Drista,” his mother chides, but it’s clear that she’s only joining in on the teasing. “What’d I say about helping your brother?”

“There’s only one left!”

“How many did you help with?”

“None because Clay-”

“Then you haven’t done what I asked, right?”

There’s a sigh and Dream watches as Drista swings her legs off her chair and makes her way to the garage. Dream decides to be just an extra bit more obnoxious by sticking his tongue out at her as she passes by him and she retaliates by smacking his arm.

It's by accident that Dream's head swivels towards the dining table and it's by chance that his eyes meet George's, who looks away like he's been caught doing something unspeakable. His hand comes up to cover the lower half of his face, but the blush has spread to the tip of his ears and there's no hiding it from Dream. Thankfully, he's saved by grace because as much as Dream would love to tease George, he's too caught up by the beating of his own heart.

There's something so domestic about George staring at him silently with a smile on his face as Dream goofs around with his sister. It makes Dream shy. In fact, he thinks he'd be more confident standing *naked* in front of George.

Dream coughs awkwardly and he watches George drag his palm up to cover his eyes this time, a sure sign of defeat. Sapnap tosses both of them a questionable glance, but Dream purses his lips in response and that seems to be all Sapnap needs to know. He rolls his eyes and then pulls out the chair in between him and George.

"C'mere, Dreamiekins," Sapnap calls and Dream splutters at the nickname.

"What?" He laughs, moving the glasses from the kitchen counter to the dining table. He places one by each plate and then heads back to the refrigerator to grab the water pitcher.

"You heard me," Sapnap replies, patting the seat gently until Dream has finally plopped himself down on it. "I can't believe you didn't just use the button on the fridge."

"Sometimes being a little old-fashioned is nice," Dream replies, standing up again so that he can reach for the pitcher and start pouring water into each of the clear glasses. "Don't you agree, George?"

It's not meant to be a jab at George's age, but George takes it that way and replies with a dry 'ha ha'. The implications of his own words dawn on Dream and he can't help the laugh that bubbles past his lips. Slowly, it turns into one of his signature wheezes, voice almost dissolving the higher the pitch gets.

"Okay," Dream says in between laughs, wiping at the corner of his eye with the back of his hand. "I didn't mean it like that, you're such an idiot."

"Oh, yeah, I'm the idiot," George scoffs, resting his chin on his hand and exaggeratedly rolling his eyes.

“Yeah, you are,” Sapnap chimes in, nudging Dream’s side with his elbow, “I got you, brother, don’t worry.”

The childish bickering continues for a few minutes more until everyone is seated at the dinner table. Then the conversations die down and the feasting begins, much to their empty stomachs’ joy. There’s still a comment thrown around here and there, but for the most part, they’re focused on devouring the delicious meal they’ve been blessed with. As Sapnap has once said, Dream’s mom could honestly give Gordon Ramsay a run for his money.

George seems to agree. The bites he takes are small, but with the intent of savoring each piece. He could finish the whole thing in the blink of an eye if he really wanted to, but the way he makes a satisfied noise with each bite shows just how much he wants this experience to last. He’s very verbally expressive about it too, making sure to let Dream’s mom know just what taste explodes on his tongue whenever he tries something new.

Dream knows this is just how George always is—eager to indulge in anything that has to do with food—but a part of him tells him that George is overdoing it for the sake of making Dream’s mother happy. And it works. It works well. She’s laughing at each of George’s reactions, offering to make the brunette anything he wants, and seems rather pleased when taking a bite of her own food. She’s usually very critical about how her food turns out, but today she seems to be more relaxed. It makes Dream smile to himself.

It’s similar to the day Sapnap had first tasted her lamb recipe too. He had been so vocal about just how much he loved it. Sure, he wasn’t making all those commercial approved squeals George was, but he was loud and showering Dream’s mom in dozens of compliments. It led to her telling him later that night that Sapnap was quickly becoming her favorite son.

This one, he thinks to himself as his eyes dart back and forth between his mother and George, *can’t be your favorite son too.*

“This,” George cuts himself off, remembering to swallow the food in his mouth first when Drista teases him for it. “This is so good. It’s actually so good.”

“You really think so?” Dream’s mother giggles, reaching over to plop another spoonful of pasta on George’s plate.

He can be your favorite son-in-law though.

Dream finds himself blushing feverishly at his own thoughts.

A loud knocking at his bedroom door snaps Dream out of his half-asleep state. He waits a few seconds, hoping the knocking will die down and that whoever is bothering him will go away, but of course, that doesn't happen. So, groggily, he tells the person to welcome themselves in.

The door unlocks and Dream sits up, running a hand through his hair. His eyes take a second to adjust to the sudden stream of light that enters his room. Barely a sliver manages to sneak in, so his room is hardly bright enough for him to be upset, but he scowls nonetheless. As if to appease him, whoever shuffles in closes the door behind them.

The bed dips and Dream has to drag a hand down his face to help wake himself up. A draft brushes past him, sending shivers down his spine, but Dream doesn't mind. In fact, he rather enjoys it; it's refreshing and one of the reasons he likes sleeping shirtless.

"Yes?" Dream says, breaking the silence.

A hand rests on Dream's shoulders and Dream immediately recognizes the slender fingers that span across his freckled skin.

Suddenly, he feels very, very awake.

He turns to his side, making out George's silhouette in the darkness, and because he hates not being able to fully see him, Dream reaches around and turns on his desk lamp. George isn't looking at him. He seems much more interested in how his own hands look, running down Dream's arms. Every now and then, he'll curl his fingers ever so slightly and trace his nails down the blazing skin instead. Dream will try his best not to react, but the strokes feel ticklish and he instinctively flexes.

“What’re you doing here?” Dream mumbles, sighing gently when George presses the pads of his fingers into the small of Dream’s back, massaging the area gently. “Couldn’t sleep?”

“Not quite,” George whispers, fingers trailing lower and lower. “Patches is sleeping on my bed and I don’t have the heart to move her.”

Dream has to suppress an embarrassing yelp when George’s cold fingers push past the waistband of his pants. “Oh, so she finally came to you?”

George only hums in response and then the bed squeaks as he pushes himself closer. His hand returns to the dip between Dream’s prominent back bones and guides the blonde to fall gently back onto the sheets below. Dream feels the addition of weight as George climbs on top of him. The breeze from the draft is long gone, now replaced by the warmth of George’s body and George leans in until there’s hardly enough room to breathe. His rosy lips press against Dream’s shoulder and Dream can’t withhold his gasp of surprise.

“Weren’t you waiting for her this entire time? How come you’re not- fuck,” Dream cuts himself off when George’s teeth sink into his skin in retaliation. “Watch it.”

George presses his tongue against the reddening area as a faux apology which Dream falls for until he feels mischievous fingers skirt along his chest. Before he can say anything, George finds what he’s looking for.

He rolls one of Dream’s hardening nipples in between his thumb and his index finger.

The reaction is instantaneous. Dream arches his back off the sheets, surprised by the sensation brought about by the foreign touch, and his hands fly up to cover his face in embarrassment. George has the audacity to giggle while his lips remain pressed against Dream’s shoulder which allows Dream to feel the full extent of his joy. Dream takes a second to regain his breath and when he’s about to wrestle George off, George tugs.

“George!” Dream gasps, one hand diving into brunette curls while the other remains slapped over his eyes. His hands are large enough to cover the blush on his cheeks, but at this point, he’s certain George can see the color spreading to his chest. “What- what are you *doing*?”

George doesn’t reply. At least not verbally. He lets go of Dream’s swollen nipple, but only to replace his fingers with his torturous tongue. Dream stifles a groan, tugging George’s hair to say

things his lips can't. George stops for a second, making sure he isn't misinterpreting Dream's signals, and Dream bites through his embarrassment, shoving George's head back down. He can feel the coy smirk against his skin and as much as he wants to wipe it off of George's smug face, that can wait for later.

"Were you- God, fuck- were you waiting for this?" Dream asks, spreading his fingers so that he can peek in between the gaps.

The look George gives him is so sultry, Dream finds himself unable to hold the gaze. He covers his eyes again.

George pulls off with a lewd pop, blowing a puff of air to see the bud twitch in response. A few seconds pass and Dream thinks George is done with his teasing, but then he feels George's tongue reintroduce itself to his other nub. Making sure it isn't neglected, George teases the bud with his teeth and then wraps his lips around it, applying gentle suction. Dream's breath hitches at the feeling and all that does is spur George on.

"Hey," George mumbles, pulling away again. When Dream refuses to glance at him, George pinches the pink nubs with his fingers and tweaks them gently.

Dream cries out embarrassingly and uses the hand covering his eyes to silence his mouth instead. He yanks George's hair in a pathetic attempt to get back at the older male, but George only grins lopsidedly at him.

"What?" Dream huffs, voice barely audible.

George runs his tongue past his lips and then rests his chin on Dream's chest. His lips move and Dream can feel George's breath hit his skin, but he can't make out what George has said. Ironically, the silence is too loud.

"What?" Dream repeats, eyebrows furrowed together.

George shakes his head, instead tilting his head down and pressing a kiss right over Dream's beating heart.

"No," Dream says, bouncing George on his lap with a slight shift of his hips. "Say it, come on."

George doesn't change his mind, shifting up to rest his head in the crook of Dream's neck, "It's nothing."

Dream is about to protest but George halts his train of thought abruptly. His hand cups Dream's growing erection and Dream flushes because he's sure that George felt him prod his thigh before Dream even realized he was getting hard. He jerks his hips, unable to help himself as he grinds against George's palm, and he drowns a whine into George's hair.

"Need help?" George asks, as if he wasn't the one to cause Dream's problem.

Dream nods eagerly, which George feels rather than sees. "*Please.*"

Patches gets to sleep soundly in George's bed that night. Alone and undisturbed.

"Morning," Sapnap grumbles as he shuffles into the kitchen. He's got eye bags under his eyes that speak for themselves.

Dream raises an eyebrow, taking a sip out of his coffee mug. "Valorant?"

"No, I could hear you guys fucking all night long," Sapnap is quick to respond.

Dream splutters, choking on his drink, and then reaches behind himself to grab a tissue he can wipe his mouth with. When his eyes return to Sapnap, Sapnap looks just as shocked as he does.

"I- I was fucking joking, dude," Sapnap says, absolutely mortified. "What the fuck? What the fuck?"

“No, we didn’t-” Dream tries, voice strained from the violent choking he’d done a minute ago.
“We didn’t *fuck*.”

“Sure,” Sapnap replies dryly, taking the long way to the fridge just to avoid Dream. “Well thankfully, I didn’t hear any of that.”

“No, really, we didn’t-” Dream tries again, setting his cup down.

“Didn’t what?”

Dream freezes, eyes darting from Sapnap to George. The way George is dressed in one of Dream’s oversized shirts is incriminating. It’s slipping off his shoulder, leaving fresh bites exposed for everyone to see, and he’s limping. Unfortunately unbeknownst to Sapnap, the only reason behind the limp was the cramp George felt in his leg this morning.

They *really* didn’t do anything. Anything past messy blowjobs, that is.

“You two are freaks,” Sapnap says with a laugh, pouring himself a cup of milk and grabbing a banana out of the fruit basket. “I hope you spared Patches.”

“I would never do anything in front of Patches,” Dream is quick to say, offended that Sapnap would think he’d ever be that irresponsible or careless. “Patches is my daughter.”

“What the heck are you two nimrods talking about?” George groans, slinking into one of the chairs and resting his cheek against the cold marble top of the kitchen island.

Sapnap doesn’t reply, but playfully pretends to puke as he excuses himself and rushes to his room, yelling something about being late to someone’s stream. Dream hears the door slam shut, reopen at the sound of faint meowing, and then slam shut a second time.

“Morning,” Dream says, walking over and standing next to George. He reaches out to comb his fingers through George’s hair in a futile attempt to flatten the messy curls. “You look good.”

George scoffs, pushing himself up until he’s resting his chin on both his palms. “You’re only

saying that because I'm in your shirt."

"No, you always look good," Dream replies, leaning down to place a soft kiss on George's forehead. "You just look *extra* good in my shirt."

George hums in response, reaching over to rest his forehead on Dream's shoulder, and Dream slides himself closer to make things easier. Blissful silence washes over them. Dream hears each soft breath George takes and he smiles to himself as George nuzzles closer. George is not a fan of early mornings, but he's still up at 10 today because Dream asked him to be. Dream also hadn't told him *why* he had to get up early which makes it all the more surprising that George actually ended up listening, but Dream supposes that goes to show how much George cares about him.

"So, what was yesterday about?" Dream asks, wanting to kill his own curiosity.

"Patches was on my bed," George replies like it's the most obvious thing in the world.

"I don't doubt it," Dream responds, turning the coffee mug around in his hands. "But usually when someone finds their bed occupied, they just find somewhere else to sleep."

"Did I not do that?"

"No, George, you quite literally did not. In fact, I had to beg you to sleep."

George pulls away, tilting his head up to face Dream. He glares, which Dream expects, but there's also a faint blush on his cheeks and of course Dream's not just gonna let that slide. He sets his mug down and spins George's rotatable seat around with the flick of his wrist. The movement startles George, but what nearly causes him to slip off is Dream looming over him, hands on the countertop on either side of George, caging him in place.

There's also a look in Dream's eyes that almost *challenges* George to try and sneak his way out of this conversation again.

George concedes, huffing in feigned irritation. "I just- I just wanted to."

“You wanted to,” Dream repeats back to him with a snort. “Wanted to what?”

“Do stuff,” George continues meekly, still avoiding Dream’s piercing green eyes. When he’s met with no response, he sneaks a peek at Dream and then flusters over the way Dream is staring at him. It’s a gaze that prompts an answer George is more than aware of how stubborn the younger man can get. “I just- I got excited.”

“Over?” Dream asks, leaning in even closer.

George leans the same distance back, hands coming up to rest on Dream’s chest without the intent of pushing him away. “Living in the same house as you. In a house that’s- you know- ours.”

“Ours and Sapnap’s,” Dream corrects, just to be a little shit. George punches him in the chest in response and Dream apologizes in between wheezes. “Sorry, sorry. That’s cute though. It’s a thing, isn’t it? What’s it called? Honeymoon fever or something?”

“Oh my god,” George says, this time *actually* pushing Dream away. “That’s not- you are so far off- you’re dumb, you’re actually dumb.”

Dream watches him hop out of the chair, flip him off, and stomp out of the kitchen. Dream blows him a kiss, smacking his lips obnoxiously loud so that George is aware of his actions. He hears a ‘fuck you’ from the bathroom down the hall and laughs to himself.

Dream approaches the sink, turning the faucet on and adjusting the temperature of the water so that it’s just right. It trickles down Dream’s hands, reaching his mug and rinsing it clean. Dream reaches for a sponge, pumping a bit of soap onto the surface, before scrubbing it against the inside and outside of the mug. The soap bubbles as Dream washes it out with water again and once he deems it clean enough, he places it gently in the dishrack. He lets his hands soak in the warm water for a few seconds more and then he turns the faucet off.

He pats his hands dry using the kitchen towel and then turns around, staring at nothing in particular while he rearranges his thoughts. He’s got a good date (yes, *date*) planned ahead for the two of them, but he’s not sure if he should stick to buying food on the way to the picnic field or if he should make stuff to eat now. With the latter option, there’s a possibility it could turn out horrendous; however, maybe George would appreciate it more if it was homemade, poor tasting or not.

The door to the bathroom clicks open and Dream sees George reemerge from the bathroom, hair pushed back by a pink washband. “You never told me why I had to wake up early today. I could still be sleeping right now.”

“We’re heading out,” Dream replies as he makes his way towards George. “You can dress casually.”

George continues to eye him skeptically, lips pressed into a thin line. Dream refuses to say more, instead reaching out to tug at George’s headband. It’s soft and makes no noise when it snaps back into place. George scrunches his nose up in distaste anyway and shoves Dream away lightly only to be reeled back in by a strong arm wrapped around his shoulders. Dream teases him by nudging his nose against the side of his head and George groans (lovingly), allowing Dream to guide them back to their rooms.

Dress casually.

Dream stares at his dressers and then the doors of his closet that are flung wide open. He knows what casual means—after all, he’s the one that suggested it—and he’s been on dozens of “first dates” before, but this feels different. Okay, well, he *knows* it’s different. It’s not a date with some stranger or some girl from school that he’ll never have to face again. It’s a date with his best friend, someone who will be there for his foreseeable future. Dream can’t mess this up.

He’s already tugged on some nice-fitted jeans and he knows that for shoes, it’s going to be the same white sneakers he’s been wearing for the past few days. The hard part was deciding the top. Dream glances into the mirror, scrutinizing his naked torso as he tries to picture different shirts on him. He drags a hand over his bare shoulder, grazing each mark George had left last night, and he almost wants to wear a sleeveless shirt to display the hickeys pridefully, but he knows George will kill him if his sunburns don’t.

There’s a knock at his door and Dream lazily asks the person for what they need.

“Where’s the catnip?” Sapnap shouts.

Dream takes a second to think, “Second shelf to the left of the TV.”

“Thanks!” There’s a pause and Dream thinks Sapnap has left, but then he hears another question. It isn’t for him though. “Dude what the fuck are you wearing?”

He can't hear what George says, only muffled noises, but he does hear Sapnap's loud laughter and the door handle to his bedroom jiggling wildly. Dream barely has time to react before the door flings open and George steps in, unannounced, looking oddly determined.

"Dream, I need-"

George stops in his tracks and Dream raises an eyebrow, silently asking for George to finish his sentence. George does a double take, gaze falling down below Dream's waist before slowly returning to Dream's curious eyes. His cheeks are a heavy shade of pink and he immediately takes his leave, slamming the door shut behind him. The reaction baffles Dream because it's not like George hasn't seen him shirtless before. In fact he'd seen him shirtless just last night and this was a complete 180 compared to how George had reacted then.

"George?" Dream calls out, reaching into his drawer and deciding to settle for whatever he picks out first. It's a plain white shirt that offers no resistance when Dream tugs it on, hanging slightly loose off his frame with the v-neck cut just low enough for his necklace to show.

"Uh," George replies from the other side of the door. "I just needed to borrow a shirt. All of mine are dirty or not.. casual. I don't know."

Dream laughs, running his hands through his hair as he looks into the mirror. A few strands are out of place, but Dream remembers that George likes it when his hair looks a little messy and so he leaves them as is and heads to the door. He swings it open and is met with a beet-red George who's looking extra hard at the wall.

"You're welcome to look," Dream replies, the double meaning of his words not going unnoticed by either of them. He rests an arm on the door frame and leans his weight against it. "But I think you'd be better off asking Sapnap."

"No, he's never gonna let me live that down," George answers, ducking under Dream's arm and stepping into his room.

Dream turns around, watching as George rummages through his drawers. He hears the brunette mutter under his breath to himself, contemplating which shirts are a no-go and which are a maybe. A chuckle leaves him and George spares him a glance when he hears it. The look he gives Dream has Dream biting back another laugh and raising his hands in surrender which seems to suffice as an apology because George returns to his scavenging. He releases a pleasant huff and grabs a shirt

that's all the way at the bottom of Dream's drawer. It's brown with a white outline of a crescent moon on the chest pocket.

George reaches down, curling his fingers over the hem of his shirt, and just when Dream catches a glimpse of the skin that's been hiding underneath, George clears his throat.

"Well," George says, pausing midway in taking his shirt off. "Some privacy, please?"

"In- in my room?" Dream blinks and George blinks back as if he's challenging him. With a sigh, Dream shrugs and stands up straight, getting ready to exit the room. "Give me my phone and my keys."

George lets go of his shirt and turns around, grabbing the items Dream needs off his bed. The way he tosses them across the room is almost deadly, but Dream manages to catch them without losing an eye and makes his way out of the room. The second he turns around, he's met with bewildered stares from both Sapnap and Patches.

"Kicked outta your own room?" Sapnap asks and Patches meows as if she's wondering the same thing.

Dream scowls as he walks over, squatting down to stroke the top of Patches' head. "Shush."

Patches leans into his touch, purring softly in approval and when Dream stops, she nudges him, asking him to continue. He doesn't deny her and she repays him by licking his wrist gently to which Dream coos, showering her with all the compliments he could possibly give a cat. Above him, Sapnap is snickering as if he's never been caught babying Patches in the same way.

"So, are you gonna?" Sapnap asks.

It's not a complete question, but Dream knows what he means. He gives Patches a final fond tap on her forehead before standing up. His hands slide into his pockets in an attempt to appear nonchalant, but his shaky exhale doesn't help his case. Not that Sapnap would've fallen for his act anyway.

"Yeah."

“Good,” Sarnap says with a smile, reaching down to pick Patches up in his arms. He uses one hand to control Patches’ left paw, holding it up for Dream. “Give ‘er a paw-five. We’re proud of you.”

Dream snorts at how silly that sounds, but taps two fingers against Patches’ paw anyway. Sarnap cheers quietly and then lets Patches down, watching her scurry into his room.

“Well,” Sarnap breathes out, turning around to face Dream. He places a hand on the taller boy’s shoulder, patting it twice before grinning cheekily. “Have fun, but not too much fun.”

“Fuck off, idiot,” Dream scoffs, but the smile on his face shows how grateful he is for Sarnap’s words of encouragement. It only eases his nerves by a little, but in this case, a little goes a long way; a little means he can breathe properly. “I’ll see you in an hour or two.”

“Okay,” Sarnap agrees, stepping into his room. “Text me updates.”

He winks at Dream before closing the door and Dream shakes his head before heading to the garage where his car is waiting patiently. Too warped up in his thoughts, Dream fails to hear the soft footsteps behind him and it’s not until he reaches the door that George makes his presence known by blocking Dream’s vision with his hands.

“Guess who,” George whispers into his ear and Dream smiles, reaching up to circle his hands around George’s wrists. When he tries to pull them away, he’s met with resistance. “I said guess.”

“Hm,” Dream decides to play into it. “Could it be my amazing, beautiful, *pretty* date?”

The hands fly off in an instant and an annoyed jab is aimed at Dream’s lower back. Dream laughs, unlocking the door and pushing it open for the both of them.

“Just ‘George’ would’ve been fine,” George says, making his way to the passenger’s side door of Dream’s car.

Dream follows, pressing a button to unlock his car. When George opens the door, Dream shuts it close before George can get inside, and then proceeds to open it again himself. “Where’s the fun in

that?"

George stares at him in disbelief. "Did you just- is this an ego thing?"

"It's called being a gentleman," Dream says, reaching out to tap George's nose gently. George rolls his eyes, but climbs into the car anyway and Dream shuts the door for him.

The garage door lifts slowly after Dream finds the app on his phone that controls it. Inside the car, George is staring at the machinery in fascination and Dream is suddenly reminded that this contraption is probably rare for George to see back at home since he doesn't drive.

When Dream enters the car, George tries to hide the awe in his face by turning his head to face out the window.

"Do you wanna close it once we're out?" Dream asks after he starts the car and waits for the engine to boot up. He tugs his seatbelt on and then glances over to make sure George has his fixed properly as well. "You just have to press the red button when I tell you to do so."

"Okay," George says eagerly, reaching over to grab Dream's phone out of his lap.

Dream laughs fondly and then shifts the gear to drive before gently pressing on the accelerator. The car moves out of the garage and once they're far enough, Dream lets George know that it's okay to press the button. George doesn't wait another second.

"Convenient, right?" Dream asks, adjusting their position so that George can watch the garage door come down without craning his neck awkwardly. "We can control the front door locks and the some of the lights in the house with that app too."

"Really?" George asks, looking down at the phone and eagerly pressing around to see what else the app has to offer.

Dream swears he sees the porch lights flicker sporadically right before he drives away from the house.

A crinkle breaks the silence in the car.

“Can you wait five minutes?”

George stops, hand already deep into the McDonald’s bag. Dream sighs in defeat as George awkwardly pulls his hand out, offering to feed Dream the fry he’s picked up. Dream shakes his head dismissively and George pops the fry into his mouth despite looking guilty.

“We’re almost there,” Dream says, taking a quick glance at the map on his phone. “I still can’t believe you picked McDonalds by the way.”

“You didn’t tell me we were going on a picnic until *after* we ordered,” George replies, reaching for the bag again and then stopping midway when he catches Dream looking at him through the corner of his eye. He rolls the top of the bag up to seal it shut and mumbles. “I’m hungry, okay.”

“I can see that,” Dream snorts, making a turn to enter the park.

It’s early into the afternoon, so it’s no surprise that there are a few cars in front of them, but Dream has been here far too many times before and knows exactly where to find the perfect hideaway spots. They continue driving and the groups of people gathered at the park get smaller and smaller until they only spot a face or two every few seconds.

George squints at the road ahead of them. “This almost feels like you’re trying to kill me.”

“Manhunt in real life,” Dream jokes, pulling over slowly when he finds a good spot to rest at. “Start running.”

“You’re not funny,” George says, undoing his seatbelt when Dream shifts the gear to park.

The engine turns off and the car quiets down. Dream slides his seatbelt off and then peeks into the mirror by his window to make sure he's in the clear before getting out of the car. George is already waiting outside, the McDonalds bag in one hand and the picnic blanket in the other. Dream locks the car doors and then makes his way around to join George on the other side.

"Let's set up over there," Dream says, pointing up ahead. "By the flowers."

George is two steps ahead of Dream, already walking towards the more colorful patch of the field. He thrusts the McDonalds into Dream's arms and then spreads the blanket, struggling to set it down because of the breeze that suddenly blows by and threatens to snatch the piece of cloth right out of George's hands. It takes a few more seconds of muffled curses until George is satisfied with how he's laid out the blanket and he rushes to lie down so that it stays put. Dream gets tugged down with him.

"Ouch," Dream says when his ass collides with the ground, the bag slipping out of his hands and landing in between him and George. Thankfully, nothing spills out. "Careful, loser."

"No," George says simply before pushing himself up into a sitting position and opening the bag. "Finally, God. I'm starving."

"You've said that twenty times in the last hour," Dream notes, reaching out for his chicken sandwich. George tosses it into his lap instead of placing it on his awaiting palm, just to be spiteful. "Real mature."

He hears George mock him, but he doesn't say anything back, too focused on undoing the wrapper. He's hungry too, even if he hasn't been as vocal about it as George has. He just enjoys teasing him a little more than he should, but it's not like George minds. Actually, George should be pretty fond of it, or else he wouldn't have agreed to this date in the first place, right? He likes that Dream teases him, he likes Dream.

"So," George says, putting his box of chicken nuggets down in his lap and searching for a packet of ketchup underneath all the fries. "To what do I owe this delight?"

"What?" Dream asks, snapping back into reality. He takes a bite out of his sandwich as he waits for George to clarify.

“I said,” George mutters as he squeezes a bit of ketchup into the corner of his box. “Why are we here?”

Dream swallows his food slowly, watching as George gingerly dips a nugget into the sauce before bringing it up to his lips.

“I can’t pamper the boy I love by taking him on a nice date?”

George’s cause of death is nearly a McDonald’s chicken nugget.

When he’s done coughing and sipping the life out of their fountain cup, he returns to his food. His refusal to comment on what Dream has said is not surprising and a silent surrender to their game of banter for now. Dream happily counts the victory in his head and takes another big bite out of his sandwich.

Time passes by. The two of them finish their food, basking in the sun while talking about this and that. George lays down first, his head making a pillow out of Dream’s lap, and Dream hunches over, blocking the sun from reaching George’s eyes. The way George smiles up at him calls back spring butterflies to his stomach.

Dream extends his arm, brushing his hand over the edge of the picnic blanket, and then he plucks a daisy out of the ground. He makes sure to get the stem with it and blows away a few pieces of dirt before bringing the flower to George’s hair. George, with eyes closed, doesn’t suspect anything when Dream’s fingers comb through his locks, so Dream is granted full liberty of tying the daisies around small tufts of George’s hair. It’s only tight enough so that the daisies cling to his hair without falling; Dream currently isn’t feeling mischievous enough to make George look silly.

When he gets bored of that (or rather, when he’s done decorating all of George’s hair that’s visible to him), Dream reaches for his phone and quietly snaps a picture. Well, he *tries* to be quiet, but he forgets that his ringer is on and the shutter is loud.

George reacts immediately, snapping his eyes open and frowning at Dream, “What did you just do?”

Dream holds his phone up in the air before George can swipe at it and George’s left eye twitches because he hasn’t moved an inch and yet somehow his height is already being ridiculed.

“Nothing,” Dream finally says, but if George wasn’t already suspicious of him before, he sure as hell was now.

“Liar.” George accuses, folding his arms over his chest. “What did you do?”

Dream shakes his head and George grumbles, pushing himself up so that *now* he *can* attempt to steal Dream’s phone. Though when he does that, a lone daisy falls out of his hair. George furrows his eyebrows, confused at first, but realization sinks in as he picks up the flower.

“Oh, you little,” George says before running a hand through his hair, effectively undoing almost half of Dream’s hard work. “Dream!”

“Hey!” Dream pouts, watching the flowers sway in the wind as they fall from George’s hair. “I worked hard on that.”

“Yeah, I can see,” George scoffs, but instead of continuing to pull each daisy out, he leaves the rest to appease the whining blonde. “Let me see the picture at least.”

“No, you vixen,” Dream scoffs, leaning down just enough so that he can nudge his nose against George’s. “I know you’re just gonna try to delete it.”

“Worth a shot,” George mumbles and Dream smiles at the sour look on George’s face.

George tips his chin up, leaving a soft kiss on Dream’s lips which effectively surprises the latter because although they’re isolated, they’re still in public. Nonetheless, when George leans in again to deepen the gentle peck, Dream figures that if George doesn’t care, neither should he. He’s been overthinking way too many things for way too long.

One of George’s hands crawls up Dream’s arm innocently enough that Dream pays it no mind and the other lands on Dream’s thigh, demanding more attention, but everything remains sweet. George’s lips move carefully against his, kissing with only the intent of kissing and nothing more, and Dream responds with the same amount of passion.

They pull away for air, foreheads pressed together. Dream stares at George lovingly, causing shy giggles to bubble past George’s lips. The staring contest is cut short by another kiss that George initiates and Dream doesn’t protest, happily drowning his adoring laugh.

George's arms loop around Dream's neck and Dream encourages him to scoot closer by patting his back lightly. Blindly, George moves over, legs bent at his knees and on either side of Dream. Dream gives him the extra nudge that pushes him into the blonde's lap.

It's maybe into their fifth or sixth kiss that Dream drops his phone behind his back and guides George down to lay on the blanket underneath them. George instinctively reaches down to grab onto Dream's shirt and Dream uses the opportunity to catch both of George's wrists in one hand, pinning them down over the Brit's head.

"Nice try," Dream laughs at George's innocent facade. "I felt your fingers graze my hand."

George huffs when he realizes he's been caught, "Whatever."

Dream has fallen for George's kisses of distraction one too many times. However, even though he's grown aware of it, he's sure they'll work against him again every now and then. In fact, if George hadn't messed up, they would've worked this time too.

While Dream's lost in his own thoughts, George is looking up at him with pink cheeks. The position is embarrassing to say the least and George has been squirming in Dream's hold to get that point across, but Dream is evidently not paying any attention. It takes a quiet and shy, "Dream," to bring the man hunched over him back into reality.

Being the little shit that Dream can be, when he gets a grasp of the situation, he only grows smug. "Yes, Georgie?"

George groans, trying to pull his hands out of Dream's hold, but to no avail, "Let me go."

"Sure," Dream replies, but instead of moving to free George, he only sits up and shifts his hips, making George increasingly aware of how suggestive things may seem. "On one condition."

"I'm not having sex out here. Bring me to the car at least."

"What? That's not what I- George- *what?*"

“Oh,” George breathes out, even more embarrassed. “Nevermind. Carry on.”

“No, wait,” Dream says, cheeks now flushed the same color as George’s. “Let’s revisit that. *Bring you to the car?* What does that mean?”

George flails in Dream’s grasp, trying to escape the intensity of Dream’s stare. He hates that he can’t even cover his face, thanks to Dream’s iron grip on his wrists, and that he’s therefore forced to face Dream after what could be arguably the worst slip of tongue in history.

“Shut up,” is what George ultimately settles on. “What was your condition?”

“Tell me what you whispered last night,” Dream says. George’s eyes widen for a split second, but because he’s exposed with nowhere to hide, Dream catches it. “See, I knew it was something important. Why didn’t you just tell me?”

“It’s really not- it’s not that important,” George mutters but the way he gnaws on his lower lip is contradictory. “Why are you hung up over that?”

“Because you always do this,” Dream replies, placing his free hand on George’s stomach. “You always say something to have it be said and not heard. If it’s important enough for you to want to say, I want to be able to hear it, George.”

George presses his lips to the side, running through an entire list of scenarios in his head, while Dream continues to eye him up and down. There’s really no backing out of this one, unless he *really* doesn’t want Dream to know.

Dream comes to the conclusion that it’ll take more than that to convince George and so he adds, “Besides, I’ve got something to say too.”

George perks up at this, like a dog catching a whiff of its favorite treat, “You go first.”

“What? No- I-”

“No, come on. You go first and I’ll-”

“I literally asked you first-”

“I’ll say mine after!”

“That’s not fair-”

“Dream, just- just go- come on-”

“*George*,” Dream says, the hand on George’s stomach now snaking down to George’s thigh. Dream sinks his fingers into the denim clad jeans in frustration. “Do you really not want to say it?”

George stares up at him, blinks once, twice, and then realizes that Dream isn’t going to humor him by letting this drag out for much longer. So, he flutters his eyes shut in defeat and lets out a tiny sigh. Dream waits patiently, although it’s clear that he’s all too eager to know why George is so embarrassed.

“I was just going to say,” George begins, swallowing thickly. “Well, like, I wanted to say it at a better time, it’s just- I couldn’t really help myself last night.”

“George,” Dream mumbles, loosening the grip on his thigh so that he can work his hand up to George’s hip, thumb pressing gentle circles into the skin. “You’re rambling.”

“I know,” George confesses and Dream hums softly, listening to the pang of guilt in his heart and letting go of George’s lithe wrists.

Immediately, George’s hands fly down to his face, saving the little bit of dignity he has left. Dream chuckles at the sight and then pushes George’s hip gently, trying to scoot away. To his confusion, George’s legs only tighten around him, keeping him in place. He hums to prompt an explanation, tapping George lightly, but George doesn’t let up and Dream gives up on trying to move away.

“I’m in love with you.”

The words are spoken so softly, they nearly get drowned out by the whistle of the wind. Dream thinks he's dreaming for a hot second while George remains unmoving. They sit there quietly, George's hands having yet to leave his face, until Dream clears his throat.

"That's," George groans, digging the heels of his palms into his face. "That's what I was gonna say."

"You," Dream begins without knowing what direction he's headed in. His hands reach up to tug on George's wrists, but this time, George willingly drops them from his face. He's already made himself as vulnerable as can be, so there's no use in hiding. "Is that what you were so scared to say?"

George balls his hands up into fists and Dream deserves the light punch he receives to the chest.

"No, look," Dream laughs, placing his hands on either side of George's head as he looms over his lover with glee. His fringe tickles George's forehead, but George says nothing, only blowing an annoyed puff of air at Dream's face. "I'm in love with you too, doofus."

It's not like George isn't expecting to hear that from Dream. Dream's been spelling it out for him through his actions since the start of the summer. Still, he drops his gaze and tugs Dream close enough for him to hide his face in the soft fabric of the taller man's shirt.

"I'm so, *so* in love with you," Dream emphasizes, dropping down carefully and flipping them over so that he can squeeze the brunette in his arms. George remains hidden in his chest, but the warmth from his cheeks reaches Dream. "You one-upped me," Dream continues with a snort. "Now what I have to say is gonna sound lame."

"Say it," George urges, poking Dream's side. "Or I'm never speaking to you again."

"*Never?*" Dream gasps dramatically and George pinches him. "Ow, okay, okay. Well, mine was more of a question."

George sneers at that, "What do you mean 'more of', moron? It's either a question or it isn't."

“Hush,” Dream scolds playfully and as much as George hates listening, he stops his teasing. “I wanted to make this more romantic, but I think this fits us perfectly well.”

George glances up at him and tilts his head. Dream motions for him to wait a second and then shoves one hand into the front pocket of his jeans, reaching around until he finds the packet he’s looking for. Carefully, he pulls the item out and when George sees it, his eyes light up in recognition.

“I got watermelon because I didn’t know what flavor you’d like,” Dream laughs awkwardly, twirling the ring-pop in his hand. “Items from, uh, the store on our way home.”

“What?” George stares at him like he’s crazy. “When we got ice cream? When did you have the time to.. Did you steal it?”

“*What?* No! *No*,” Dream shakes his head, appalled at the thought. “You were distracted when I grabbed it and I made Sapnap pay for it.”

He’d nudged Sapnap when they’d met at the counter and Sapnap had given him a look that said ‘I want to laugh so bad right now’, but he had held it in and taken the packet from Dream. To be discreet, he had paid after them, but it wasn’t like George was really interested in what Sapnap was buying anyway when he had a cup of ice cream melting in his hands.

George takes the ring pop, laughing quietly as he tears the wrapper. “Well, thanks, but how is this a question?”

Dream rushes to grab the packet back before the ring-pop is fully out of its wrapping. Then, he slowly tugs the rest of the wrapper off himself, holding the ring-pop as if it were the most fragile thing in the world. George grabs the wrapper before it can fly away, shoving it into their empty McDonald’s bag.

“Ahem,” Dream says playfully, pulling the most serious face he can manage.

“Oh no,” George mumbles in mock fear, but his smile gives away his true thoughts.

“Mister George NotFound,” Dream says, his unoccupied hand getting ahold of George’s left one. “Will you be my boyfriend?”

The grin on George's face is wide enough to split his face into two, but despite how giddy he feels, he responds the way Dream knows he will. "Let me think about it."

Dream rolls his eyes and George spreads his fingers, waiting expectantly for Dream to adorn his ring finger with the watermelon ring-pop. Too eager to wait for a proper response, Dream quickly slides the ring onto George's finger and George immediately brings his hand up to his lips, tongue lapping curiously at the candy.

"Well, since it tastes good," George muses, patting Dream's chest. "Yes, mister Dream WasTaken, I'll be your boyfriend."

Dream laughs breathlessly, arms landing around George's waist once more to give his *boyfriend* a hug that expresses everything he's too speechless to voice. George carefully scoots up, stealing a kiss from Dream and giving the man a taste of the artificial flavor.

"I love you," Dream mumbles before George can move too far away.

George smiles, holding his hand up so he can laugh at how abnormally large the ring-pop is. "I love you too, idiot."

"Hey, lovebirds."

Dream makes an uncommitted noise as he steps in through the front door, George right behind him. Sapnap cackles, fully aware of what happened thanks to Dream's flurry of messages which, in Dream's defense, were only sent because Sapnap had spammed him first.

"Are you going somewhere?" George asks when Sapnap bends down to tie his laces.

“What does it look like?” Sapnap replies and George smacks the lid of his cap lightly in response. “Hey! Dream, control your boyfriend.”

Dream instinctively reaches out to hold George’s hand so that he can break up the sibling-like fight, but when Sapnap’s use of the word ‘boyfriend’ sinks in, he nearly squeaks in surprise. Sapnap finishes putting his shoes on, stands up, and wiggles his eyebrows at Dream before moving past the flustered duo.

“I’m gonna go to the skatepark for a bit,” Sapnap says, grabbing the spare set of keys off of the hooks next to the door. “I’ll be back for dinner, don’t eat without me!”

Dream reassures him that they won’t and Sapnap flashes them a boyish grin before disappearing behind the front door.

“Speaking of dinner,” Dream says, slipping out of his own shoes. “What do you want? I was thinking that we should order pizza since I’m kind of too lazy to cook. Or maybe some Thai food? I haven’t had-”

George laces his fingers with Dream’s and tiptoes, lips brushing over the tip of Dream’s ears.

“Oh,” Dream breathes out when George finishes whispering. “Um- yeah! Yeah, I- we should- like I- I’m down.”

George raises his eyebrows at Dream’s stuttering and then giggles softly, letting go of Dream’s hand. Before Dream realizes what’s happening, he’s racing up the stairs and leaving the awestruck man in the dust. Patches nudges Dream’s leg and Dream looks down, staring back into his pet’s round eyes.

“Help,” he squeaks and Patches meows sympathetically.

Dream fans his face, working hard to push back his prominent blush, but he knows that the second he steps into his bedroom, the heat is going to come back in full force. He gives Patches one last look for good luck and then carefully makes his way to the door that’s left slightly ajar for him.

Listen, it's not that he's not excited. His heart is practically beating out of his chest from how excited he is. He's just *nervous*. Because now, *now* they were boyfriends and *now* George had told him he was *in love* with him.

Alright, so that doesn't change much since they were acting the same even before the change in labels and he was well aware of George's feelings even before he said them aloud, but still. It felt different. They were under *their* roof now and-

"Are you coming in or not?"

Dream pushes the door open slightly further and steps in right as George kicks off his jeans, letting them fall forgotten on the floor. Dream's throat dries at the sight and George smiles like he knows exactly what Dream is thinking, scooting further up on Dream's bed. His actions cause his shirt to hitch up just enough for Dream to see the hem of his briefs and Dream knows that George had done that on purpose.

Dream slams the door shut and makes his way over. He doesn't bother locking it, hands too occupied with tugging his own shirt off his body so that the heat coming off of him is no longer trapped. George reaches for his own shirt (*Dream's* shirt), but Dream is quicker, kneeling onto the bed and halting George's actions by gripping his forearm gently.

"Let me," Dream whispers, voice lower than he intends it to be, and George's lips part, but nothing comes out. Instead, his arms go slack, granting Dream permission to do whatever he wants, and Dream rewards him with a soft peck on the top of his head, "I'll take care of you."

George flutters his eyes shut and raises his arms so that Dream can carefully peel his shirt off of George. They share a laugh when George's hair gets pushed back, both of them reaching up to comb down George's fringe. George mumbles something about Dream not knowing how to tame his hair and Dream argues that that's not true—that he's probably much more skilled at this than George is.

"I've got my hair done by a professional," George says, sliding his hands down Dream's bare upper body until he reaches the waistband of Dream's jeans. "He gave me tips."

"Oh, did he?" Dream laughs softly, watching George undo his pants for him.

The chain of his zipper gets stuck and George groans at the hindrance. Dream moves to help him,

but George swats his hand away gently, determined to do it by himself. It takes a few jerks, but George is able to get the zipper to work and Dream sits up on his knees so that it's easier for George to push his jeans down. When those have been discarded, George reaches for Dream's briefs, but Dream stops him.

"You first," Dream whispers, pushing George back gently so that George gets the hint and lies down on the pillows behind him. "It's all about you right now."

"That's not fair," George huffs, but he doesn't protest when Dream's fingers slowly creep up his thighs.

Dream dips into inner thigh territory and George's breath gets caught, his protests forgotten by his traitorous tongue. Instead all he can do is spread his legs apart, inviting Dream— *encouraging* Dream to continue.

Dream moves back, lowering himself down until his lips follow the path his fingers have traced out for him. His breath is warm, warmer than what George expects, and George's legs twitch in anticipation. Dream smiles affectionately and then, when George has mustered the courage to look down at him, he presses a soft kiss to George's inner thigh.

George tries to anchor himself, one hand clawing at the sheets below while the other covers his mouth. Dream lets out a 'tsk' at the sight and to show his disapproval further, he bares his teeth and sinks them into the soft flesh. It's not enough to bruise, but it gets his point across and George surrenders the sounds trapped in his mouth.

"I love you," Dream says, tongue pressed against George's skin, and before he can place another kiss higher up on the pale thigh, he has to pull the grey briefs away. "You're perfect."

His nimble fingers crawl north, hook into the elastic waistband, and finally begin to rid George of the last piece of clothing he has on. Dream isn't haste, working the grey briefs down slowly. If anything, George is the one suffering from impatience and his frustrated frown brings a grin to Dream's face. Yet instead of kissing away the creases on George's forehead like he usually does, Dream occupies his mouth with something else.

"Dream," George gasps. Plump lips hover over George's reddening tip and before George can even complain, a curious tongue dips into George's slit, tasting the bead of precum that's collected there. "Oh my *god*."

Dream holds the base of George's cock in one hand while he slowly lowers his head. His lips part with no resistance, inviting George to rest inside his mouth, and George jolts at the warm sensation, causing Dream to groan in surprise when the head of George's dick hits deeper than he's expecting it to. Dream holds still, letting his jaw adjust, and then carefully swivels his tongue around the thick underside. He's able to stay down for a few seconds more, rejoicing in the soft whines that leave George's mouth, and then the lack of air in his lungs causes him to pull up and off.

A hand thrusts itself into Dream's wavy locks and Dream finds himself being pushed back down onto George's cock after his first gasp of air. Dream almost gags at the sudden intrusion, glancing up at George in bewilderment. George is looking down at him with eyes narrowed in concentration, the pink of his swollen lips matching his cheeks, and Dream is blown away by the sight.

George apologizes and Dream is about to gesture that it's okay when George nudges his head further down on his cock. Dream places his hands on George's hips, giving them a squeeze after he takes in a deep breath through his nose. Thankfully, George understands the look Dream gives him, and after a bit of hesitation, he begins to thrust his hips up, chasing the bliss that Dream's hot cavern provides.

When his hips come to a pause, George holds Dream down as far as the blonde can go, and Dream moans to coax him. The vibrations elicit a breathy sigh from George and Dream feels his own cock twitch in response. Before he can even get the chance to sneak a hand inside his briefs, George picks up the pace again, hips bucking at an incessant rhythm. Dream's eyes roll to the back of his head as he lets George use him for his own pleasure. His briefs have never felt tighter and he wants nothing more than to grind against the sheets, but he reminds himself that he promised to take care of George first and fights back his primal urges.

George moves his hand, getting a more steady hold of Dream's hair, and when his thrusts get sloppy, he resorts to tugging Dream on and off his cock instead. As he feels himself getting closer to the edge, George slowly comes to a stop, not wanting to reach his orgasm too soon, but Dream isn't having any of that. Dream cracks his eyes open and challenges George to continue, but when George refuses, Dream pushes himself up. The lewd slap of George's cock hitting his stomach resounds through the room and causes George to squirm. Dream watches intently and circles his finger around the swollen head of George's cock, wanting to drink in every image George can paint for him with his facial expressions.

"Stop, m'gonna," George whispers, trying to wiggle away from Dream's touch. "Dream, *Dream*, I'm--"

"I know," Dream says, forming a fist with his hand and sliding it down George's cock. "Go ahead."

His leisure strokes get faster and faster, until George is gasping for air. It stings when George tugs his hair a little too harshly, but George is too far gone to notice Dream wincing. His hips chase Dream's touch, the bed squeaking with each thrust, and right before George reaches the edge, Dream leans down and wraps his lips around George's leaking tip.

"Fuck!" George cries out, back arching off the sheets as he releases into Dream's awaiting mouth.

Dream manages to catch most of it, but some continues to drip past his lips and down George's softening dick. He chases after it, tongue more than willing to lick George clean, but George whimpers, feeling too overstimulated to have Dream continue. Dream decides to be merciful, sitting up and wiping the back of his mouth with his hand, and George grimaces at the sight.

"Oh, come on," Dream laughs in disbelief and cocks an eyebrow up at George. "I just had your dick in my mouth."

"That's different," George replies.

"I had your cum down my—"

"*Clay!*" George is quick to grab a pillow and hit Dream's shoulder with it. "Shut *up*."

Dream smacks his lips shut, the teasing glint having yet to die from his eyes. He slips out of bed, much to George's dismay, but his intentions are clear as soon as he reaches for his bedside drawer. A few pieces of paper and some empty boxes get moved around before Dream is able to find the bottle of lube. When George sees the object in the palm of his hand, he spreads his arms, expecting Dream to join him in bed again, but Dream stays still.

"What?" George inquires with a pout.

"I don't have a condom," Dream groans, running a hand through his hair. "Let me see if we have some in the bathroom."

He places the bottle of lube on the bed next to George, but before he can leave, George grabs his wrist. Dream finds himself being yanked down with a surprising amount of strength, legs giving

away and causing him to nearly fall face-first. He pushes himself up on his hands, turning his head to face George in utter confusion.

“It’s fine,” George says meekly, resting a pillow over his lap. “I want to feel you.”

Dream thinks he’s going to die before the end of the night.

The quiet request shoots straight down to his dick which throbs from the unfair neglect it’s been receiving. Dream curses softly under his breath and counts to three, needing to calm himself down before he ravages George right then and there. George doesn’t look too opposed to the idea either, leaning back against the headboard and pushing his legs apart again for Dream to rest in between them.

Dream crawls over, grabbing the bottle of lube on his way, and positions himself comfortably before popping the lid open. He squeezes a generous amount over his fingers, not caring about possibly ruining his sheets, and after he deems that it’s enough, he brings his hand down in between their bodies. George knocks the pillow off his lap, trying to get a better view, and Dream grabs it before it flies off the bed.

“Up,” he tells George and George lifts his hips so that Dream can slide the pillow underneath him.

When George looks comfortable enough, Dream presses the pad of his index finger against George’s needy hole. George’s breath quivers in anticipation while Dream rubs the tight rim teasingly and watches George struggle to decide if he wants to move his hips or not. Dream continues the almost sadistic torture for just a bit longer, waiting until George is on the verge of taking matters into his own hands, before finally breaching past the tight ring of muscles.

George exhales softly, chest heaving as Dream slowly works his finger inside of him. Dream gives him a second to catch his breath, but George has had enough, shifting back until Dream’s finger nearly slips out, only to buck his hips forward again. Dream curls his finger, timing it just right, and George jolts in surprise.

By now, Dream knows George’s body like the back of his hand.

Not wanting George to do all of the work, Dream begins to move his wrist, thrusting his finger in and out of George at a steady pace. It doesn’t take long for George to get used to the size and beg Dream for another. Dream complies, carefully introducing his middle finger to George’s addictive

heat, and George's walls flutter around him as he scissors them open. George takes more time getting used to the second finger and even more time getting used to the third, but Dream is patient with him. He leaves soft kisses all over George's face, his neck, his shoulders. Every now and then he slams his fingers against that one bundle of nerves he knows will rip a wanton moan out of George.

"You're so beautiful," Dream whispers, speaking over the obscene squelch his fingers make as they ram in and out of George, working the brunet open. "And you're all mine."

George whines, hips jerking when Dream picks up the pace. Dream nearly forgets about his own erection, so focused on making George cum because God knows how badly he wants to see the beauty underneath him come undone.

"Gonna dirty yourself again for me, baby?" Dream asks, his fingers brushing against George's prostate with a little more insistence. "Go ahead, I've got you."

He curls his other hand around George's cock, giving it a few rough pumps, and George thrashes in his hold, painting their chests white again. Dream stares attentively as George's chest rises and falls and his lips shake with each whiny sigh that leaves him. Dream doesn't realize his fingers are still moving inside of George until George reaches down, trying to push Dream's hand away, his legs squeezing shut.

"Color?" Dream asks, slowing down his movements.

"Green," George replies after catching his breath and Dream wastes no time pinning one of George's trembling legs down onto the mattress. "Dream, what are you- fuck!"

Dream thrusts his fingers back inside of George, wanting to coax more sinful noises from those pretty pink lips of his. The hunger inside of him grows larger and larger until the only thought left in his mind is to make George feel as good as possible. George sounds wrecked, nails digging into Dream's forearm, and if Dream wasn't holding him down, he would've probably slipped free.

"Wait- Dream, wait," George manages to get out in between gasps and although Dream doesn't want to, far too eager to see George on the brink of ruin again, he listens. "Can't- not yet."

"You can give me one more," Dream mumbles, kneading George's thigh to be somewhat persuasive. "You wanna be good for me, right, doll?"

George catches himself before he nods and Dream chuckles when he's on the receiving end of a light-hearted glare. He's about to move his hand again, ignoring the cramp that's creeping up on his wrist, when George speaks again.

"With you," George whispers, pushing Dream's hand away gently. "I wanna- I want to.. with you."

Dream knows what George is trying to say, but he pretends he doesn't just so he can hear George say it. "Want to.. what?"

George doesn't fall for it, but before Dream can do anything, he reaches down to place his hand over Dream's erection which has been straining against his briefs for long enough. Dream grunts, immediately chasing the touch, and it dawns on him that maybe he's been too cruel to himself. Maybe he needs to get on with it and do what they *both* want.

"Okay," he gives up, letting George work his briefs down past his thighs before he moves to get rid of them himself.

He can feel George's eyes on him as he tugs the piece of cloth past his ankles and drops it somewhere next to the bed. When his eyes return to the man laid out ever so temptingly in front of him, George motions for him to come closer.

Dream grabs the bottle of lube again, squeezing what's left onto his cock, and lathers himself up hastily. The needed friction draws a hiss from him and he rushes to position himself properly. George's hands rest on his shoulders and his nails sink into Dream's freckled skin when Dream rubs his tip against the puckered hole.

"I'll pull out," Dream mumbles, unable to wait much longer.

"You don't have to," George replies.

Dream lets out a low curse at the offer and finally, *finally* pushes his hips forward. George mewls at the burn, Dream's cock stretching him out in ways he's only imagined up until now. His discomfort is heard and soothed by Dream's kisses.

George pulls Dream closer by tossing his arms further around Dream's neck. He wants nothing more than to distract himself from the initial sting and who is Dream to deny him?

When George feels himself growing more used to having something—someone—so big inside of him, he signals for Dream to move by rotating his hips. Dream surprises him by pushing in further, having yet to bottom out, but thankfully, George's muscles have relaxed and the feeling is less painful.

"You're so fucking tight," Dream groans next to George's ear and George shudders, hiding his face in Dream's shoulder. "I stretched you out so well and you're still this *tight*."

Dream pulls out until the head of his cock catches around the rim. He marvels at how it feels like George's quivering hole is almost refusing to let him go. George whines in embarrassment upon noting how Dream is paying attention to each and every detail, no matter how small, but that doesn't deter Dream. In fact, it motivates him.

"Fuck," Dream mumbles, bucking his hips forward until he's fully sheathed inside of George again. "I'm gonna fuck you until you're my perfect little cock sleeve."

George moans a soft little '*please*' and rolls his hips down, grinding himself against Dream. The action causes Dream to brush against George's prostate and George squeezes his eyes shut, jerking in Dream's hold. The aftershocks of Dream overstimulating him are still there, making George weaker than he usually is.

George's reactions only serve to make Dream harder. Dream pulls out slowly and then forces himself back in at a sharper angle, making sure to rotate his hips so that George *really* feels him. It makes George jump in his arms, his sensitive cock to dragging against Dream's stomach, and he nearly sobs at the sensation.

"You want that?" Dream whispers, setting a steady pace as he rocks his hips in and out of George. "Want me to mold you until you're a snug fit for my cock? Until you're only meant for me?"

He pushes himself to sit up on his knees and George's hands fall from his back to the sheets below. Carefully, he hooks one hand under George's knee and guides his leg up over his shoulder while his other hand splays over George's thigh. He takes note of how his fingers are able to reach from one end to the other and even higher up.

Dream leans forward again, pistoning his hips at a different angle which has George almost lurching off the bed in response. Soft ‘*ah*’s and ‘*oh*’s leave him, sounding more like hiccups than full moans; each one feeds into Dream’s ego, telling him to go harder, to go faster, to *wreck* his boyfriend as he writhes underneath him.

Beads of sweat form on Dream’s forehead and a few strands of hair plaster against his skin. The room is hot, reeking of sex, but nothing compares to the heat that engulfs Dream each time he pushes deeper and deeper inside of George. George’s walls pulse around him like they’re set on making all of Dream’s filthy wishes come true.

“Clay,” George whimpers, glancing at where their bodies are meeting with brutal force. “More, *more*. Need it, need you so bad, Clay, please.”

Dream pushes George’s thigh, spreading him out even more so that he has a clear view of his cock disappearing inside of George’s puffy hole.

“Take it, then.”

His legs and George’s ass are covered in lube, but Dream thinks it’s not nearly as messy enough. So, he straightens his posture and spits directly at George’s swollen rim, watching his saliva slide down his cock when he pulls out and disappear inside of George when he pushes in. George doesn’t even seem to notice, too busy letting out incoherent pleas and broken moans.

Dream grabs George’s hips strong enough to hurt and jerks George down to meet each of his unforgiving thrusts. Dream’s mind is clouded with pleasure, his own release being at the forefront, and his speed quickens until George has hot tears rolling down his cheeks. The way he cries out Dream’s name sounds damn near angelic and Dream can’t help but reward him by drilling his hips into him with reckless abandon. George reaches down, fisting his own cock that’s been bouncing uselessly against his stomach, and Dream can tell by the way George *squeezes* around him that he’s close.

“Ask,” he says with an especially hard thrust, stilling his movements and remaining deep inside of George. Behind George’s arm, Dream can see the bulge in his stomach indicating how far he reaches.

“Please,” George’s voice is hoarse from all the screaming. “Please, *please*, Dream.”

When Dream doesn't respond immediately, George wails in frustration and tries to move his own hips, but he's weakened from pleasure and lacks the energy to truly satisfy himself. Regardless, he continues his pathetic attempts, no longer caring about Dream staring him down, and only gives up when exhaustion catches up to him. At this, Dream finally decides to take pity on him and picks up his tempo again.

The sound of skin slapping against skin echoes in the room, challenging the squeaks of the bed, while George's airy moans compliment Dream's heavy grunts. A knot begins to form at the pit of Dream's stomach and he chases the euphoria it promises by drilling harder and *harder* into George. The thrusts become almost inhumane, Dream refusing to let up even just a tiny bit, and George rewards each forceful intrusion with a whine.

"Inside," George begs, one hand curling around Dream's bicep. "Inside me, Clay, fill me up. Make me yours."

That's all Dream needs.

His hips stutter as he reaches the edge and the moan that leaves him is so vulgar, it makes him blush. George tightens around him, sighing softly at the warmth of Dream's release as it paints his insides. Dream takes a second to recover and then pulls out, watching in awe as a mixture of fluids leaks out of George's stretched out hole.

George's hand gets quicker as he chases his own orgasm, but Dream can tell that it's nowhere near enough and he's more than happy to help. He scoops some of the cum that trickles down George's thigh and shoves it back inside his soiled hole, making sure to thrust deep enough for George to emit a startled moan. He's able to fit three fingers inside of George easily and although he could probably fit a fourth, he doesn't bother to try.

He knows he can make George fall apart with less.

George pushes down onto Dream's fingers, trying to fuck himself on them to the best of his abilities, but the most he can do is gyrate his hips. It works somewhat, making the tips of Dream's fingers hover over his abused prostate, and George whines, trying to get Dream further inside.

Dream coos at the sight and then rearranges himself to be more comfortable, propping his left hand on George's knee. He starts off slow, but that doesn't last long when George moans like he's never been touched before. Dream's muscles flex as he thrusts his fingers in and out of George at an unrelenting pace, making sure to curl them when he reaches deep enough inside, just so he can

press assertively against the spot that has George seeing white splotches that look a lot like stars. George's hand falls off of his cock and Dream is tempted to jerk it off for him, but his desire to have George reach an orgasm from his fingers alone is stronger.

"Baby," Dream calls out, almost in a trance from how beautiful George sounds. "Come for me."

Dream's name leaves George barely above a whisper, sounding more like a strangled whimper than anything else. His back arches, his hands tremble as they dig into the sheets, and if Dream wasn't sitting where he was, his would've already squeezed shut. Dream pulls his fingers out carefully, watching George squeeze around nothing but air, and smiles to himself. As much as he'd love to continue teasing George (and maybe earn him another release), he decides to play nice, knowing George must feel extremely weary.

So instead, he reaches for a tissue from the box on his table and uses it to clean George up. Because George is whining for a nap, Dream only manages to wipe enough for George to not feel gross as he lies fucked out on Dream's bed. The sheet is crumpled up and tossed into the bin next to them and afterwards, Dream crawls on top of George and falls onto him. George makes a grunt before lazily wrapping his arms around Dream's shoulders.

"That was nice," George mumbles, lips dragging across Dream's forehead.

Dream hums in agreement, "Well, you have a boyfriend that's extremely good at sex, so."

George doesn't hesitate to smack him on the shoulder. "Shut up."

Dream laughs, leaning up to brush his lips over George's, and when George silently invites him to continue, Dream gives him a proper kiss. George responds just as sweetly, drawing imaginary circles onto Dream's back, while Dream's hands roam along George's sides carefully, wanting nothing more than to caress the smooth skin.

When Dream pulls away, George is already staring at him, a small smile tugged onto his lips which Dream returns. "I love you."

George clicks his tongue against the roof of his mouth, pulling Dream down for another chaste kiss.

“I love you too.”

“Are you sure about this?”

Dream stares up at George with an amused grin. It’s his first faceless stream and somehow George seems more nervous than him, pacing back and forth in the room like a worried mother. Dream relaxes against his chair and then pats the extra seat to his left. Sapnap has already called the seat to his right.

“I’m sure,” Dream says and George gives him a look. “Really, George.”

George sighs, finally coming over to sit down on his designated chair. He definitely has more to say, but before he gets another word out, Sapnap barges into the room with three bottles of water and a plate full of sliced mangos.

“Okay,” Sapnap cheers, setting everything down on the table that’s *not* stacked with expensive equipment. “Let’s get this show on the road!”

Dream clicks away on his screen, doing some last minute tweaking on his stream settings. The fact that it isn’t set up perfectly beforehand seems to make George even more nervous and Sapnap passes him a bottle of water before George can even ask for it. Dream snorts, mindlessly changing the title of his stream and hovering his mouse over the ‘Go Live’ button when he’s done.

“Are we ready?” He asks, looking to his left and to his right. Sapnap gives him a thumbs up and George swallows the water in his mouth. He clearly has something to say, but Sapnap silences him by hitting Dream’s mouse before the anyone else has time to react.

They’re live.

Immediately, George’s expression changes like someone’s flipped a switch and he eagerly waves

at the camera. Sapnap matches his energy and greets chat, but Dream freezes for a solid minute. All three of them are in frame, but since Dream's the one in the center, it makes him feel like he stands out. It *is* his stream, but still.

Underneath the table, George reaches for his hand and Dream takes it, lacing their fingers together.

"Hey, guys," Dream begins awkwardly, backing the greeting up with a sheepish laugh. George and Sapnap cheer enthusiastically, trying to ease up the tension weighing on Dream's chest. "It's uh, it's me. Dream."

The chat is fast, as always, but there's more people watching than usual. It's surprising, considering Dream had made zero announcements, but word does travel fast on the internet. He makes it a point to not look at chat so that he's less distracted and Sapnap goes the extra mile of closing chat and changing Dream's donations until it's at a ridiculously high amount. There's no doubt that someone will still donate a thousand dollars just for this one special occasion, but for now, Dream can breathe a bit easier.

"I'm in Florida," George announces playfully, shifting the focus onto him for a bit so that Dream isn't as nervous, and Dream's thankful for it.

"I'm also in Florida," Sapnap adds, just to join in on the fun.

Dream goes through his script again, but the more he tries to rehearse it in his head, the more the words become jumbled and the more he decides *fuck it. I'm just going to be me.*

He cuts into whatever conversation George and Sapnap are having, "Right, so- hi, again. Welcome to the stream! I'm Dream, or well, Clay."

He takes a deep breath and then counts to three.

"This is my best friend, Sapnap," he says, as if it's never been said before. Sapnap grins at the camera and waves once again before making a show out of eating mango slices.

"And this," he turns to George. *Is my other best friend* is what the script says, but Dream stumbles over his words, taken aback by the glimmer in George's eyes. "Is my boy- oh, um."

Sapnap continues to chew, making no reaction to the comment because he's a little *too* good at being professional and he knows that even the slightest twitch of his eye will give them away. Dream, however, is horrifically new to being on camera so the guilt on his face is incriminating and he's about to apologize profusely when George straight up laughs at his face.

Sapnap glances over, no longer able to hide his smile either, and Dream is baffled, not really knowing what to do. Actually, baffled is too light of a term. Dream is mortified.

"Yeah," George says, wiping away a tear from the corner of his eye.

Dream blinks twice, not knowing how George could possibly save what's become a shit show. His hunch is that they're playing it off as a joke, that George is going to tell Dream to *shut up* and say that his 'bit' is stupid; or that maybe George will tease him by asking if there's something he wants to share with the class, implying that maybe Dream has a secret boyfriend he's been hiding from chat.

It ends up being the last one, but not in the way Dream expects.

"I'm his boyfriend, George."

Chapter End Notes

Long time no see, friends! I hope everyone is doing well.

I spent a long time writing this and somehow the chapter totaled to about 20k words. However, am I happy with it? Not really, but I think the more I stare at it, the more I scrutinize it and the worse it gets. :) That's always the case and I'm sure others relate to my struggles, haha.

It's been over half a year since the last update and I apologize for that. My health has not been at its peak and I chose to focus on that first. I encourage everyone to prioritize their own health as well! Be it fellow writers who feel too pressured or simply anyone reading this who feels incredibly overwhelmed at the moment.

Thank you for everything. Here's my [twitter](#) where you can learn about any of my past, current, and upcoming works. :) I will try to be more active as my schedules clear up and reply to messages when I have the time to.

Love you all,

Ser.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!